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Ritual and Trust: How Religion Shapes Belonging in Africa and the Diaspora

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Ritual and Trust: How Religion Shapes Belonging in Africa and the Diaspora

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Ritual and Trust: How Religion Shapes Belonging in Africa and the Diaspora

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ABSTRACT

Debates surrounding immigration, state-building, and civil society all center on the same underlying question: what determines belonging? In this study, I investigate how individuals—in particular modern-day Africans on the continent and in the diaspora—make choices about institutional affiliations, specifically religious groups. I propose a view of collective participation in religious communities as a basis of trust and belonging in African societies. My research uses surveys and original ethnographic data in a three-part approach. In the first chapter, I look at the religious, ethnic, and geographic contours of Ghana, and explore whether trust networks on these bases appear to be politically integrated in an even and equal way. Chapter 2 expands the assessment to a sample of 13 African nations, showing how religious identity in concert with education and party membership shapes grassroots interest in the political system. Chapter 3 returns to the case of Ghana, but this time using ethnographic data to look at how trust networks are built through religious participation. I use data from Accra as well as from the Ghanaian community in Chicago. In this chapter, I show that 1) individuals choose religious congregations as part of a search for new social ties, and 2) religious participation is one of the major ways—and for many the *primary* way—that they expand and deepen their trust networks. Thus, rather

than declining in importance as modern culture spreads its influence, or being less salient for the elite urban classes, religious participation seems to be increasingly crucial and for those who have moved to the cities and overseas. While most studies of religious Africans have portrayed them as traditional, conservative, and passive in their receipt of missionization, in this study I propose a vision of religious Africans as modern and cosmopolitan agents who, within the bounds of certain structural constraints, work collectively to pursue professional and educational aspirations. Through their religious participation, they make choices about their individual futures and that of their societies, as do other growing transnational communities.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The public significance of religion in the modern world, particularly in developing nation-states, is a matter of some contention. The dominant perspective, going back to the work of Durkheim (1995), understands religion as a source of social cohesion that brings diverse groups together under a shared narrative (Ruiter and De Graaf 2006; Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Woodberry and Shah 2004; Stepan 2000; Putnam 2000:66; Inglehart 1999; Warner 1997; Smith 1996b; Berger 1967). On the other hand, in the wake of Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis (1993a, 1996), critics have rightly noted the potential of religion to divide societies and motivate violence (Juergensmeyer 2000:6-8; Kurtz 1995:212-214; Haynes 2007:430-432; Laitin 1986). Religious divides can be between religious traditions or between religious and secular worldviews (Putnam and Campbell 2010:3-6; Wolfe 2005:1-4; Norris and Inglehart 2004:4-5).

Both of these perspectives are supported by evidence. What is needed, therefore, is a new conception of religion in the modern world that can be used to explain both its inclusionary and divisive potential. In this study, using the case of modern-day African populations both on the continent and abroad, I propose a theory of religion *as collective participation in the building of trust networks*. I analyze religion at the grassroots while still paying attention to its macro-level effects on social cohesion and political integration. In order to do so, I combine both population-level survey data with original ethnographic data collection. Ultimately, the study informs our understanding of religion's dual effects, and how those play out among one of the most religious populations in the world: Africans. In the process, it also highlights the importance of investigating grassroots agency within structural constraints, the nature of social trust as existing within clusters of social relations, the centrality of the religious congregation as an object of

study, and the usefulness of religious-based trust networks for international migrants and societies more generally impacted by migration and social fragmentation.

Religion as a Basis of Trust among Africans

The question of what holds societies together is a pressing one, particularly for African nations. It is a foundational concern of social theory, following a rapid progression of world-historical moments—the Industrial Revolution, the Colonial Period, the trans-Atlantic slave trade—that have restructured how society is arranged. While African societies have experienced these transitions in their own unique way, the underlying question is the same: what determines to whom, to what, and how we belong?

Trust is intimately related to belonging, since belonging implies mutual obligation, and subjecting oneself to relations of mutual obligation implies trust (Tilly 2005; Warren 1999; Offe 1999; Mizstal 1996). Trust ensures that we get what we need from others just as we give them what they need from us. Even if we only trust someone in an exchange because the law requires them to do right by us, the exchange still requires trust (Offe 1999). Yet as societies have generally shifted from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft* patterns—where relations based on personal, involuntary, and fixed ties are increasingly replaced by relations based on interchangeable, temporary, and malleable ones—the bases of trust have changed. Why and how people come to trust others is now an open question.

Africa's history has resulted in troubling obstacles to the development of trust. This lack of trust is a perpetual problematic that social theorists and political engineers have been anxious to solve (Fukuyama 2004; Clapham 1993). In the short run, lack of trust between ethnic, linguistic, religious, and regional subgroups has frequently resulted in civil violence (Bates 2008; Haynes 2007; Posner 2005; Gourevitch 1998; Laitin 1986; Horowitz 1985). In the long run, lack of trust limits the effectiveness of the democratic process, which must be built on a certain degree of trust—never perfect, but always sufficient—between rulers and ruled and between

diverse constituencies (Fukuyama 2004; Clapham 1993). Some attribute Africa's underdevelopment and civil strife to ingrained inter-ethnic hostilities reaching back into a pre-colonial past (Horowitz 1985). Others have identified the lack of democratic institutions and abuse by autocratic tyrants as the main problem (Bates 2008; Fukuyama 2004; Bayart 2000; Gourevitch 1998; Bratton and van de Walle 1994); and still others blame forced dependency at the hands of Europeans colonizers (Flint and de Waal 2009; Bryceson 2006; Sylvain 2005; Chidester 1996). All of these assessments have some truth. Yet none of them ably diagnose the problem in a way that naturally suggests a solution—we cannot undue pre-colonial, colonial, or post-colonial history. What we can say is that African societies today suffer from an acute crisis of trust, but also that as old bases disintegrate, people reach for new ones out of necessity. African communities *do* find ways to trust, and *do* develop their sense of belonging to larger entities; in order to enhance trust, we must know where and how they do so.

In this study, I look specifically at participation in religious communities as a basis of trust in African societies. These societies are by all accounts heavily religious, and not only have they held onto many traditional religious practices but they have fully adopted and adapted Christianity and Islam (Trinitapoli and Weinreb 2012; Magesa 2004; Meyer 2004; Robinson 2004; Isichei 2004; Gifford 1998). While retaining many elements of traditional African religion, these societies are still fully Christian and/or Muslim in that routinized participation in local congregations—a defining feature of these faiths—is a regular feature of daily life. Certainly, not everyone is as devout or as regular in attendance, but nevertheless the institution of church- or mosque-going is firmly established.

Although certain areas were converted to Islam much earlier, the near-universal presence of the local congregation is a 20th-century development. This change occurred while

governments were in constant flux, colonial and post-colonial leaders repeatedly oppressed and manipulated the public, imported legal systems replaced traditional models for marriage and family life, growing cities drew youth away from village life, and ethnic solidarities alternately faded and intensified (Marshall 2009; Bates 2008; Gifford 2004; Tabutin and Schoumaker 2004; Takyi and Addai 2002; Bayart 2000; Ferguson 1999; Bratton and van de Walle 1994; Bledsoe 1990). In other words, the religious congregation as an institution steadily grew in importance as other bases of belonging shifted or fell apart. Thus, religious participation and belonging became a ready source of trusting relationships.

Certainly, other bases of trust and belonging survive. The family unit, although varying greatly in size and structure, usually remains the most important. In places like Ghana where education follows the British boarding school model, schoolmates share a strong bond. In exploring religion as a basis of trust, therefore, I keep these other two bases of trust—the family and educational contexts—in the picture. Nevertheless, religious belonging has several unique characteristics. The first and most important is that it is voluntary: individuals must opt in to the religious trust network. Secondly, it is malleable: individuals can choose between different religious congregations based on their own preference. Although there is sometimes family pressure to attend a certain *type* of congregation, and not to convert between Christianity and Islam, nevertheless participation is not usually forced. In most countries there are no legal or political repercussions to conversion, and religious freedom is high (Grim and Finke 2007).[1] Also, within religious traditions there are numerous local congregations, especially in large urban areas. Thus, one can choose to restructure one's networks by leaving a congregation and joining a new one while not changing one's religious identity.

[1] Data on religious freedom in Africa is publicly available from the International Religious Freedom Project, which can be accessed at http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/IRFAGG.asp.

This malleability and ubiquity means that when individuals migrate, both regionally and internationally, there are options to participate in a religious congregation and develop new ties of trust within that group. It expands individuals' and families' options for establishing trust. It also means that across a region as diverse as Africa, religious belonging will come to mean different things in different settings, depending on differences in history, political atmosphere, demography, and geography. It therefore opens up a new area of inquiry where the answers are not obvious or uniform across time and place.

The argument that I put forward in this dissertation is based on the assumption that religion matters greatly as a basis of trust for Africans, both in Africa and abroad. Rather than declining in importance as modern culture spreads its influence, or being less salient for the elite urban classes, it seems to be increasingly crucial for the itinerant, those who have moved to the cities and overseas. I also argue that religion matters *because* its malleability is well-suited to meet the demands of modern life and because it involves regular, ritualized participation with others. It matters as a basis of "ritualized personal relations" (Eisenstadt 1956). Yet how it ultimately shapes attitudes or behaviors is not uniform, but dependent on the political-historical context. Thus, this dissertation argues that religion is a nexus of collective participation, that brings people together in a routinized way and builds trust between those involved, but ultimately shapes ideas in very different ways (Burt 2005:12). In other words, what it does is bring people together and build trust in congregational groups; what it does *not* do is unify large regional populations under one overarching political or social vision. Although elites have repeatedly attempted to use religious discourse to do precisely that, the very characteristics that

make religious participation so appealing to their publics—its malleability, ubiquity, and voluntariness—have prevented them from being successful.[2]

This study also underscores the malleability of religious "identity" and religious cultural elements. At the same time, it brings the analytical focus to network-building as a key determinant of congregation involvement. Thus, it looks at religion less as an enduring ethos—though not denying the moral and ideological side of religion—and more as a collective practice that forms close ties (see Riesbrodt 2010; Warner 1997). In contrast to other work on the *effects* of religious-based ties (Smilde 2007, 1996; Wuthnow 2002; Iannacone 1990; Olson 1989) this study recognizes that social ties are frequently in flux (see Vaisey and Lizardo 2010; Bidart and Degenne 2005; Suitor and Keeten 1997; Suitor, Wellman, and Morgan 1997) and thus the processes through which they are built is an important analytic object as well as closely related to the larger process of congregational incorporation. Put simply, in an era when religious identities no longer hold the same permanence in and of themselves (Chaves 1994; Warner 1993; Crippen 1988; Hadden 1987), the social relationships that people find in congregations become the most compelling reason for choosing between religious options.

[2] For a similar argument in the case of Nigerian Pentecostalism see Marshall 2009.

Trust: The Sociological Literature

In social science, there is an increasing interest in the concept of trust but significant variation in how it is conceptualized (Misztal 2001; 1996:12-13). Alternately studied as an individual, interpersonal, and collective characteristic, it seems at times to be a catch-all for any inclination or exchange that is personal, informal, or not explicitly relying on legal sanction. Certainly, there is something mysterious about trust, for it is increasingly clear that modern institutions rely on trust but cannot create it (Inglehart 1999). Modern society has developed money, authority, and knowledge as coordinating mechanisms, but none of these can *motivate* cooperation at the level that trust can.

> This is so because successful coordination depends upon cooperation, and the latter upon the presence of perceptions, dispositions, and expectations that induce agents to cooperate…these cognitive and normative dispositions share one negative quality: they defy the logic of any of the three media in that they defy strategic manipulation or provision. They can neither be bought nor ordered nor taught within the framework of formal curricula (Offe 1999:43).

Thus, the coordinating mechanisms of modern rational-legal systems only work in so far as individuals have bought into the value of participating with the larger group, whether it is the nation, the religious sect, or the family. Yet as important as trust is to the workings of *gesellschaft* society, logically trust is a micro-interactional phenomenon. Although population-level survey data on "generalized trust" has been shown to be useful in many cases (Kesler and Bloemraad 2010; Putnam 2007; Paxton 2007; Bjornskov 2006; Inglehart 1999), this "generalized trust" has little importance if individuals do not regularly *act* in trusting ways towards the other individuals they are surrounded with.

Generalized trust is often referred to as "social capital", another ubiquitous term lacking consensus about its use. Again, social capital has been frequently analyzed at the population level as important attribute of the non-governmental sector (Paxton 2002; Defillipis 2001;

Putnam 2000; Inglehart 1999), usually understood and measured as percentages of the population who engage in voluntary associations. The problem is that in the past ten years of research, any type of behavior or attitude that could be defined as "pro-social" now seems to be a suitable indicator of social capital. The field has established that tight-knit, insular ties are *not* pro-democratic, and thus they are defined as "negative social capital" that prioritizes the subgroup (i.e. kinship group, ethnic community, etc.) over against the wider democratic community (Putnam 2007; Wuthnow 2002; Paxton 2002). The ideal for modern society thus seems to be found when individuals possess a diverse collection of ties and associations with others unlike themselves, and when these individuals trust others merely on the basis of their shared citizenship in a democratic state.

Yet who wants to live solely with "weak ties" (Grannovetter 1973), as good as they may be for democracy and one's social mobility? The perspective that places democracy as the end good to be attained seems to miss the fact that in daily interactional life, individuals almost always seek a collection of very intimate relationships and heavily rely on these relationships for their social and material needs. Several localized studies have argued that this tendency will always subvert the kind of diffuse "social capital" that might be good for democratic institutions (Smith 2006; Defillipis 2001); and in a seminal piece, Portes (1998) notes that social *capital* should never be separated from the power and economic capital that constantly flows through social ties.

Finally, to value trust in the "generalized other" downplays the fact that trust requires a *basis,* or in other words clues and signs that a particular person is trustworthy whereas another is not (Misztal 1996:22-23). To trust everyone equally is impossible; there must be some criteria by which certain ties engender deep trust and others do not. The reasons for this are alternately

understood as calculated avoidance of risk in the rational choice literature (Coleman 1990:306-310), routinized behavior in the literature on *habitus* (Misztal 1996:102-120), or quasi-fixed identities like kinship, especially in the African case (Chabal 2009; Bratton and van de Walle 1994; Clapham 1982).

Tilly's (2005) understanding of the "trust network", on which I heavily rely, solves the problem of pitting close ties against democratic solidarity. For him, trust is an interpersonal quality that binds individuals together in meaningful long-term projects like providing for material needs, developing meta-narratives that make sense of the world, and procreation. The relevant question for democratic development is not whether or not individuals trust others, but whether the networks of people that trust each other on various bases (i.e. kinship, religion, ethnicity, nationality, etc.) are integrated equally into the political system. It is obvious that individuals will always be working within and shaped by their close-knit, local networks. What is not obvious is whether those collectivities can access centralized political power—and thus are invested in the state—or are alternately excluded from the political process. The equal *integration* of trust networks, and religious participation as a basis for the formation of trust networks, is thus a major concern of this study.

The Emotional and Interactive Construction of Trust

Most of the above theories treat trust as a cognitive or motivational exercise, where actions are understood in relation to attitudes and beliefs. Yet trust is also fundamentally rooted in positive emotions towards the other. Who and when one trusts can be arbitrary from a rational perspective, but reflects likes and dislikes and emotional inclinations and responses to interactions in turn. We are not unbiased, calculating observers of those around us; quite the opposite. We click with some and are turned off by others; and we are more likely to trust someone we like but know less about than someone we know much about but do not like.

Why do we like some people and not others? The answer to that question has much to do with cultural capital (Bourdieu 1987), and the ongoing portrayal of meaningful signs in social spaces. We like people because something about the way that they talk, dress, or carry themselves connects with our own underlying desires. We like them because of both who we believe we are AND who we want to be. In a way, we are drawn to that other because we want to own them—to possess the underlying quality that they convey. The deepest levels of trust, as expressed in regular emotion-laden behavior, are found between those for whom this dynamic is working in both directions.

Does this mean that we USE trust as a tool to acquire power, or in a psychological sense a stronger self? Such would be an ego-driven understanding of human interaction, which is again too simplistic. The more complex truth is that human persons work with two sometimes-competing drives: to sustain the self *and* to sustain intimacy with others. Neither of these is primary. In the ideal case, they are complementary, for it takes an enduring, strong self to be in enduring, strong relationships with other selves. Yet the social reality is ever-changing and

never-complete, and in the short run these two motivations can be felt as contradictory, when we have to choose between our own short-term interests and that of others.

Notably, there is a central place for morality and values in this understanding of social life. Morality, as an orientation towards what is understood as "good" or desirable, comes out of self-knowledge. Certainly, moral orders come from larger social groups, and seem to be instilled by those groups in individuals. Yet individuals only come to adhere to those moral orders by owning them, or in other words coming to know themselves in terms of that larger moral order. An individual values autonomy within a culture of autonomy—like the United States—only by experiencing a very personal revelation of their own need for autonomy.

Value-coherence predictably supports positive emotions between two individuals; yet the "opposites attract" adage requires a more developed understanding of the relationship between values and social ties. As mentioned above, individuals are always at work on the self and in pursuit of social intimacy; and when we are drawn to someone quite different from us it reflects some felt internal inconsistency or inadequacy. Indeed, it is hard to deny the pervasive experience of dissatisfaction among human beings, or our tendency to seek satisfaction through intimacy with others. Whether or not ultimate satisfaction with one's self and one's relationships is possible, we seem always to be seeking it. Taking that as a starting point, it becomes obvious that we would always be forming new ties, experimenting with and improving on old ones, shifting our values to reflect the various social settings we move through, and drawing towards those who seem to have something that we lack. Social behaviors are indeed strategies, and culture is indeed a repertoire of such strategies (Swidler 2003, 1986). Yet such are not the strategies of autonomous beings driven towards self-serving ends; but rather of people who are trying to figure out both what they want and how to get it.

This theory of trust gives it supreme importance in social life, but not as a tool to be manipulated by actors or a mostly-cognitive process. Indeed, cognition only seems to come into play when we are presented with obvious proof of the untrustworthiness of someone that we would otherwise be inclined to trust. Rather, trust is a quality, like electricity, that occurs between two or more individuals: it is emotionally-driven and emerges through the interaction of the individuals' needs, wants, and values.[3]

"Trust networks" are the primary social ties within which the deepest levels of trust reside. They are those relationships within which communities engage in their most "consequential enterprises" (Tilly 2005:43-44). Although trust has been understood and measured in a variety of ways (Offe 1999; Warren 1999; Misztal 1996), ultimately trust is what people do: they engage in significant, long-term tasks together. They therefore put what matters to them most—again, morality and relationship—"at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, and failures of individual members" (Tilly 2005:4).

A certain degree of trust occurs in most human interactions; yet clusters of relationships characterized by deep trust—trust networks—are a particular phenomenon that bridges these micro-dynamics with social structure. As I will show, trust networks are not built by individual pairs engaging in calculated exchange with each other, but rather by collective participation in social rituals, where cultural capital is displayed and consumed and individuals are drawn towards certain others within the group (Emirbayer 1997). I also argue that in modern African society, the religious congregation is one of the most important arenas in which this process takes place, and thus it fundamentally shapes who they belong to, how they understand themselves, and what they consider to be worth desiring.

[3] Collins (2005) uses the term "emotional energy" to refer to the positive, emotional experience of successful social interactions.

Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation is distinctly multi-level and multi-method in its approach. Because the building of trust networks is a micro-level process with broad macro-level effects, in order to understand how religion shapes trust and belonging among African populations I use a combination of country-level survey data, regional survey data, and original ethnographic data among African religious congregations on the continent and abroad. It fits within an overall research agenda on the meaning of religious participation for African populations, in the context of their unique political history (Manglos 2010, 2011; Manglos and Trinitapoli 2011).

Chapter 1 starts by looking at Ghana, an African nation with a high international profile, home of former U.N. secretary Kofi Annan and location of President Obama's and former President Bill Clinton's recent diplomatic visits to the continent. Ghana is a representative African nation in a number of ways: it is ethnically-diverse, it has struggled economically since independence, it is a multi-party democracy, and its government has had significant difficulties instilling public confidence. Accusations of witchcraft, corruption, and over-spending by government leaders are a regular feature of public life, as is political discourse infused with religious imagery (Marshall 2009; Mbembe 2001; Comaroff and Comaroff 1997; Comaroff 1991). Ghana is unique in the size of its educated population and those living abroad, as well as in the intensity of its shift towards Pentecostal-Charismatic churches over the past several decades. It has also experienced less armed conflict than many other countries, and was home to one of the strongest pre-colonial states, the Asante Nation.

In the second chapter, therefore, I look at the religious, ethnic, and geographic contours of modern-day Ghana and ask whether trust networks on these bases appear to be integrated into the workings of the state. In this first case, I focus on accessing key public goods that only the

government can provide as an indicator of political integration. I show that ethnicity continues to have a powerful direct effect on integration, but religious identity does not. However, religious identity influences membership in the majority political party, which in turn positively predicts political integration. Thus, there is evidence that participation in certain religious congregations is connected to participation in the ruling party, supporting the theory that religious participation brings people together and restructures their networks in politically-important ways. In Ghana, the ruling party of the 2000s was strongly associated with the new Charismatic Protestant congregations, suggesting that participation in these groups may provide access to a more-elite social network.

Chapter 3 expands the assessment to a sample of 13 African nations, showing how religious identity in concert with education and party membership shapes grassroots interest in the political system. The story is much the same as above: religious identity does not directly determine whether one is interested in political issues. However, higher levels of religious participation support higher levels of political interest; and in certain contexts, participation in certain religious groups—mainline Protestants in Kenya, for example—connected with majority party membership results in very high levels of political interest. Thus again, religious participation seems best understood as a behavior that brings people together, re-shapes networks, and facilitates other types of association. Yet the religious landscape of Africa is *not* a uniform array of political-religious ideologies, where one or another group is more politically-engaged.

Chapter 4 returns to the case of Ghana, but this time using ethnographic data to look at the processes through which trust networks are built through religious participation. Because Ghanaian life in southern urban areas is organized around widespread international migration,

and because migration is a privileged moment for investigating the development of new trust networks (Tilly 2005), I use data from Accra as well as from the Ghanaian community in Chicago. In this chapter, I show that 1) individuals choose congregations to attend as part of a search for new social ties, and 2) religious participation is one of the major ways—and for many the *primary* way—that they expand and deepen their trust networks. I therefore typify congregation choice as a "relationship-driven process." I describe the many rituals through which trust is built and individuals solidify their commitment to the religious group. As a secondary point, I unpack the artificial distinction between "bonding" and "bridging" ties, noting that my informants seek out deep, family-like relationships but also seek to expand their networks of mutual obligation as much as possible.

Each of these chapters is written to stand alone in article form. Taken together, they also support a single vision of religion as *collective participation*, through which individuals build and establish trust within a network of others. Although social ties are sometimes seen as a byproduct of religious participation, in this study they are its *raison d'etre.* This perspective is based firmly in an understanding of human beings as strongly relational (Slife and Wiggins 2009; Fowers 2005; Slife 2004; Emirbayer 1997), morally-oriented (Smith 2003, 2010), and emotionally-driven in an immediate sense (Stets and Carter 2012; Riis and Woodhead 2010; Collins 2005; Haidt 2001). Emotion-laden social rituals are the link between one's identity and one's relationships. All of this is as true for religious Africans as it is true for others elsewhere; making this study of African religion not a specialized study in a parochial topic but rather an investigation into the most general and universal principles of social life.

CHAPTER TWO: TRUST NETWORKS AND DEMOCRACY IN GHANA: ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, AND REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL INTEGRATION

Preface

In order to show how religion shapes belonging, this first chapter presents an overview of the religious, ethnic, and regional makeup of Ghana. It applies the concept of trust networks to the question of political integration, often cited as the most pressing problem of African state-building. In a broader sense, this piece also demonstrates how interwoven religious identity is with historical ethno-linguistic and regional differences, and increasingly political party. It demonstrates that involvement in the mainstream religious community—Charismatic Protestantism—is correlated with membership in the ruling political party, which is in turn a positive predictor of political integration. Thus, it supports an understanding of religious participation as being linked to other types of group participation, likely working through overlapping social ties. It also affirms that Charismatic Protestantism is a mainstream tradition in West Africa, as opposed to being an "embattled", fringe, or "apolitical" community as it has often been portrayed.

Introduction

Democracies are characterized by particular public attitudes and behaviors as much as they are by certain procedures and institutions. Democratic institutions (i.e. political parties, structures of accountability, voting, etc.) depend on the existence of an involved, critical, and expressive citizenry that is diffusely supportive of the democratic model (Schmitter and Karl 1991:77; Easton 1965:273). Further, citizens do not usually approach the government apparatus as individuals, but as members of social groups or "trust networks" (Tilly 2005). Effective democratization depends therefore on both the establishment of structures of accountability *and* on the integration of diverse trust networks into the public system of rule. This integration, further, involves—and is evidenced by—certain attitudes and practices among the citizenry (*ibid:* 4-12).

As a short-hand, however, democracies are usually categorized as systems in which power changes hands through regular and relatively free elections, usually mediated by a multi-party system (Przeworski 2004; Stepan 2000; Schmitter and Karl 1991). By this simple definition, Ghana—as most other sub-tropical African nations—has been democratic since the early 1990s (Takyi et al 2010; Lindberg and Morrison 2005; Morrison 2004). Nevertheless, in the broader sense, Ghana and its counterparts in the region have been challenged in the integration of various groups as citizens (Bates 2008; Herbst 2000; Clapham 1993). The expansive geography, the multiplicity of languages, the imposition of colonially-mandated borders onto the landscape, and decades of ethnically-biased colonial politics are all contributing factors. Still, there is surprisingly little data on whether and how much the trust networks of diverse African publics are today integrated into their political systems, as indicated by their own attitudes and behaviors. This is important for broader questions of identity and belonging in the

region, since so many analysts have cited strong sub-national identities as an obstacle to democratic consolidation. In this paper, my aim is to assess religious, ethnic, and regional differences in political incorporation in Ghana, as a window into larger questions of how these factors shape belonging in modern-day Africa. Further, my theoretical framework focuses on these identities as bases of *trust*, and specifically social networks characterized by deep personal trust. I follow Tilly's (2005) conceptualization of "trust networks", and his understanding of effective democracy as a system characterized by "extensive (but by no means total) integration of trust networks into public politics" (*ibid*, 35). My question is first whether the Ghanaian public as a whole expresses attitudes and behaviors characteristic of integrated citizens, and second whether these attitudes and behaviors vary by ethnicity, region, and religion, since these are identities that are likely to mark the boundaries of trust networks in Ghanaian society. Ultimately, my goal is to offer a clearer specification of "fractionalization" and inequality of political integration, given that such dynamics are oft-cited contributors to sub-tropical Africa's economic and social ills.

I use the case of Ghana because, by some measures, it is one of Africa's most promising democracies. It has experienced several peaceful government transitions, has multiple active political parties, has a history of integrating diverse constituencies as a center of intra-African migration, has significant natural resources, and has a large educated urban class (Thornton 1998; Akyeampong 1997; Rathbone 1996; Peil 1995; Wilks 1993; Daaku 1972). Nevertheless, it also exhibits many of the symptoms of an uneven or weak state (Ohemeng 2005). Since the 1990s, after undergoing major neoliberal economic reforms, the country has experienced slow growth and received significant international assistance, but continues to have high rates of poverty both in urban and rural areas (Whitehead 2002; Boafo-Arthur 1999; Herbst 1993). Its

Gini index—a standard measure of inequality—increased from 36 in the late 80s to nearly 43 in 2006, and roughly 30 percent of its population lives on less than $1.25 a day (World Bank 2011). Factionalism seems to be an ever-present issue in political discourse, and studies of voting patterns show significant differences by region, religion, and ethnicity (Takyi et al 2010; Arthur 2009; Kelly 2005). It is therefore an ideal case for understanding the problems that continue to hamper the spread of democracy in modern Africa, even where the minimum requirements for infrastructure, good governance, strong civil society, and effective accountability seem to be present.

Trust Networks and the Ghanaian State

The National People's Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have traded control of the government since multi-party democracy was officially established in 1992. In practice both have had to balance the demands of an urban business class, the international donor community, ideological shifts towards neoliberalism in the world system, and large rural areas that remain extremely poor and underdeveloped (Ohemeng 2005; Whitehead 2002; Boafo-Arthur 1999; Herbst 1993; Robertson 1977). Both the NDC and more recently the NPP have enacted new social welfare programs while at the same time relying on a pro-business economic model and limiting social provisions (Ohemeng 2005). Yet extending social welfare to the Ghanaian population continues to be a major problem, as in other parts of Africa (Bates 2008; Fukuyama 2004; Clapham 1993). Ghana's economy has not grown as hoped, inequality has increased, and the country continues to lose large numbers of its educated and professional class to emigration (Akyeampong 2000; Peil 1995). The government's ability to develop rural areas and meet the health and educational needs of the wider population has been crippled by lack of resources and by the neoliberal prioritization of deregulation and investment in free trade over extensive social welfare spending (Teal 2006; Whitehead 2002; Boafo-Arthur 1999).

However, both parties have shown a concern for integrating under-represented constituencies into public politics. Indeed, to do so is in their best interest, since strengthening the nation-state relies on effectively "broadcasting power" over a geographical area (Herbst 2000). Within a democratic system, the relationship between the ruling apparatus and the citizenry (organized into trust networks) is one of constant negotiation, where rulers extend their influence into individuals' most important and long-term projects (i.e. building and supporting families, engaging questions of transcendence, etc.) at the same time as they provide assistance

in those projects through social welfare and public infrastructure (Tilly 2005). Certainly, it is in the interest of those in power to hoard resources and minimize the goods they provide; but if they provide poorly—or citizens perceive them as providing poorly—they lose authority in the long-term.

Thus, no political party can survive without making efforts towards incorporating broader constituencies. Indeed, due to the nature of trust networks, it is the citizenry that often *resists* the spread of state power. This is so because trust networks are by nature regulated by mores and informal agreements that are disrupted once they are formalized and bureaucratized. Preceding the spread of democratic rule, individuals depend almost exclusively on their trust networks for the most risky and the most important projects they are collectively engaged in, and the deeper the trust the stronger the sense of *dis*trust towards those outside of the network (Tilly 2005:12-13). Given this natural resistance, the integration of trust networks into public politics requires certain catalytic processes. The most relevant of these for democratization is the "creation of effective systems of protection and/or welfare by rulers" (*ibid*, 23). The effective expansion of social protection and welfare is the primary means today through which nation-states establish democratic authority over populations. Conversely, the *lack* or *ineffectiveness* of such programs leads to a greater reliance on trust networks—and by extension, deepening of boundaries between trust networks—in the wider society.

This theory contextualizes the predatory and factionalist governance in Africa so often described in the literature (Bates 2008; Bayart 2000; Bratton and van de Walle 1994). It is also more optimistic about the motives of elites than many other assessments, in that it highlights the reasons why party leaders would want to avoid factionalism in the long run. On the other hand, it suggests that democratic rule requires effective systems of protection and welfare, which are

expensive and complicated to develop (i.e. Fukuyama 2004). It also implies that assessing the viability of a democracy requires attention to a vast array of public attitudes and behaviors. Tilly (2005:10) gives a list of such attitudes and behaviors that indicate the integration of trust networks into public politics, which are too many to address in one paper. Given the above discussion about the importance of social protection and welfare, I choose to focus on the following: “relying on political actors and/or government agencies for vital services and long-term security”. Although only one indication of many, it shows up repeatedly in Tilly’s description of democracy and is perhaps the most easily measurable.

Ethnicity, Region, Religion

Trust networks are not *necessarily* built on any one particular basis, beyond the basic household unit. In other words, an identity such as ethnicity may or may not matter in the formation of trust. Thus, an ethnic or religious group should *not* be understood as the same thing as a trust network. Nevertheless, there are reasons to expect trust networks in Ghana to form along ethnic, regional, and religious lines.

Ethnic categories have been particularly fluid and malleable across Africa, and as such their actual meaning is often difficult to pin down. Despite numerous works bewailing political fractionalization and patronage on the basis of ethnicity and region across sub-tropical Africa (i.e. Bates 2008; Posner 2005; Herbst 2000; Bratton and van de Walle 1993; Clapham 1993; Horowitz 1985), the actual systematic evidence for such claims is quite limited. In the case of Ghana, we know that ethno-regional voting blocs are certainly present; yet there are also an equal number of swing regions, as illustrated by voting patterns in the last four elections (Fobih 2010; Arthur 2009; Kelly 2005). Voting has as often been unpredictable as it has followed clear ethnic lines. Perhaps the best example of this is the 2004 election in which the NDC's candidate John Atta-Mills won a clear majority in the Volta Region—a stalwart base for the NDC—but lost the majority in the Central Region, which was his own home region (Arthur 2009). Each of the two major parties—the National Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress—has a history of choosing candidates with ethnicity in mind, but usually with the goal of diversifying their base, rather than limiting themselves to particular ethnic groups or regions. For example, Vice-Presidential candidates for both parties tend to be chosen from the Northern part of the country, in attempts to portray their tickets as champions for the underdeveloped and ethnic-minority regions of Ghana (Kelly 2005).

Historically, the meaning of ethnicity was shaped by colonial strategies, and in particular the Northern regions were given less developmental significance by the British colonial government based in part on ethnic perceptions (Kelly 2005; Wilks 1993). Ethno-linguistic groups were also classified and reconstructed as part of the missionary impulse to bring Christianity to indigenous "cultures" (Meyer 2002, 1992; Dunch 2002; Brenner 2000; Chidester 1996). Yet ethnic identities were significant in pre-colonial Ghana as well. The perception of the NPP as an Akan/Ashanti party holds particular weight given that the Ashanti kingdom enacted its own military expansion across what is now Ghana in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries (Wilks 1993, 1966; McCaskie 1983,1986; Daaku 1972). Greater Asante corresponded geographically to modern day Ghana, and was made up of protectorates, provinces, and tributaries with varying degrees of linguistic, geographical, and political closeness to the Ashanti kingdom (Arhin 1967). Ethnicity—and in particular Akan ethnicity—played a role in how the greater kingdom was conceived, since to some degree the Asante kingdom's consolidation efforts were motivated by a desire to unify Akan groups into one powerful political unit (Wilks 1993; Arhin 1967). Certain groups not identified as Akans were most notably the Ewe, Mole-Dagbani, and Ga people groups, which resided in the eastern (Ewe), southern coastal (Ga), and northern (Mole-Dagbani) regions. These areas were usually administered as tributaries rather than true provinces, and retained some sense of independent sovereignty under Ashanti domination (Meyer 2002; Fynn 1974; Yarak 1986; Verdon 1981, 1980; Arhin 1967). The Ashanti kingdom was at its peak of political power and control of trade across the region when the British moved towards forced direct administration; and thus the final establishment of British rule over the area in 1906 was, from the perspective of non-Akan groups, a transfer from one imperialist to another (Wilks 1993). Akan identity was thus manipulated by rulers to support political expansions and adapted

on the ground to accommodate the diversity of foreigners and migrants moving through the region (Wilks 1993; Rathbone 1996; Arhin 1967).

Yet ethnicity is not a mere "construct" of imperialism or a tool of elite domination. It has depth in the salience of collective ancestral narratives, for example, and even differences in how kinship is conceived between ethnic groups (Frost and Dodoo 2010; Boni 2001; Dodoo 1998; Abarry 1997; Wilks 1993; Greene 1981; Verdon 1982,1979; Amoo 1946). Differences in family-formation strategies are significant as well—for example, Akans are matrilineal while Ewes are patrilineal. Polygamy also seems to be more common among certain groups than others (Dodoo 1998). These distinctions are particularly important for the formation of trust networks, especially because they make it inconvenient to marry across those ethnicities that have different models of marriage and family life. Thus, ethnicity can shape the development of trust networks even in the absence of inter-ethnic hostility.

Apart from ethnicity, regional geography has a unique role in shaping politics in sub-Saharan Africa because of the large, sparsely-populated areas, boundaries externally imposed by the Berlin Agreement between colonizers, and limited infrastructure in the hinterland (Herbst 2000; see also Posner 2005). Although Ghana's geography is smaller and more regularly-shaped than many other countries in Africa, it follows the same pattern of a colonially-established capitol on the coast that must broadcast power into large, sparsely-populated northern areas with limited infrastructure (see figure 1). By comparison, the Ashanti kingdom expanded naturally from its capitol centrally-located in Kumasi, and Ashanti power was understood to radiate outward from this center and its reach was measured by the amount of time it took to travel from the center to the hinterland and back (Herbst 2000:41-49; Wilks 1993). This was similar to how European states built their geography, through conflict at the borders that established their

dominance over areas radiating out from the capitol. The modern Ghanaian state, by contrast, inherited control over the outlying areas in the abstract, absent of the full capacity to broadcast power into these areas. Thus, we would expect areas furthest from the capitol to have a more ambivalent view of the state's effectiveness, since they are less subject to invasive exercises of power but also less enhanced by social welfare programs.

Finally, religious involvement in Ghana is a mark of distinction that falls primarily along Christian and Islamic lines. As dynamic Ghanaian Charismatic churches have attracted large numbers, authors have speculated on their potential to restructure trust networks on the basis of shared religion (Smith 2004; Gifford 2004; Martin 2002; Meyer 1998). My own qualitative research in urban Accra suggests that congregations are seen as a space for finding suitable marriage partners, where shared religious commitment potentially replaces education, wealth, or ethnicity as the most important criteria for selecting spouses (Manglos 2010).

Historically, Islam and Christianity have come from different geographical directions in Ghana: the first across the Sahelian strip to the North at the hands of Arab merchants and scholars, and the second from the South, through trans-Atlantic trade with Europe (Wilks 1993; Robinson 2004: 33-40). Christian missionaries also dominated the educational system in the colonial era, and major urban centers developed in Christian rather than Muslim areas once Britain established the Gold Coast Colony (Meyer 2002; Wilks 1993; Robertson 1977). Polygamy has also historically been more accepted among Muslims than Christians, and certain ethnic groups with different models of family life have been disproportionately attracted to one or the other religion. Thus, although we should be careful to *assume* that religion in and of itself forms a meaningful division and basis for the formation of trust networks, there are a number of reasons to suspect that religion could be such a social boundary.

Clearly, more evidence is needed to determine if any of these three factors—ethnicity, region, and religion—form a meaningful basis for the formation of trust networks on a widespread scale. In this study, I investigate this question by showing whether any of these factors is correlated with differences in political incorporation, which would indicate such a meaningful boundary according to Tilly's theory of trust networks and democracy. There are three possibilities: that these distinctions do not affect trust network formation, that they do affect trust network formation but trust networks are equally incorporated into the political system, or that they do affect trust network formation and that these trust networks are NOT equally incorporated into the political system. In this study my goal is to assess first of all whether the third of these possibilities is the case, rather than to adjudicate between the first two. Thus, it is to assess whether the dynamics of trust network formation along lines of social distinction (ethnicity, region, and religion) are producing unequal degrees of political incorporation among these groups. If such is the case, the implication is that any one of these factors shapes belonging by developing as an insular, potentially-embattled identity. In the wider context of this dissertation, the ultimate focus is on religious belonging. Yet the above narrative should make it clear that religious identity cannot be understood without also paying attention to regional and ethnic differences.

Data and Methods

In this chapter I use waves two and three of Afrobarometer data[4] from Ghana collected in 2003 and 2005, respectively. I combine these two waves of cross-sectional data in other to expand the size of my sample, and to offer some evidence of declining or increasing differences in political incorporation during this period. Such differences should be read with caution, however, given the short period of time separating these two samples.[5] Missing values were dealt with using listwise deletion, resulting in an analytical sample size of 2,323.[6]

Political incorporation. As suggested earlier, there are many possible measures of political incorporation, but in the modern era the most common catalyst of trust network incorporation into the state is through the effective extension of social welfare and protection to the population. Further, individuals' felt personal investment with national politics and resulting participation also reflects effective political incorporation (Campbell 2004). Thus, in order to assess incorporation I use two dependent variables: a scale of whether individuals have ever accessed basic social welfare services and a general scale of interest in public politics.

The first of these scales was created from the question, "how difficult is it to access the following public goods?" For each public good, respondents were given a "never tried" option. Since my interest is more in whether or not they have accessed these goods than in the difficulty of the process, I converted responses to dichotomous indicators of whether or not the respondent had ever tried to access the following public goods: help from police, primary school placement, and an id card. Conceptually, these items fit well with the definition of trust networks as those

[4] Afrobarometer was conducted in most countries of SSA, and is a representative survey of individuals randomly selected at the level of country, sampling cluster, and household. Its goal is to tap public opinion on an array of political and economic issues (Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2005). Sample sizes in all countries total at least 1,200, and in many cases are more than twice that size. More information is at www.afrobarometer.org.
[5] Waves one and four of the Afrobarometer were not used due to changes in relevant indicators.
[6] Variables with the most missing values were age and presence of social services in the enumeration area, for which "don't know" and "indeterminate" responses were both coded as missing.

with whom individuals engage in their most significant projects, since all three are crucial to survival and/or job-seeking in numerous situations. Individuals and families who have accessed such public goods have thus engaged with and relied on the government in order to accomplish these goals. All "don't know" responses were also coded as 0. I did not include "health care", since so many health care options are provided by churches and nonprofits rather than the government, and it is much less common to have never accessed medical services. I finally converted these three dummy indicators into an additive index.

The second measure of political incorporation is the similar to the one used in the first part of this dissertation to assess interest in national politics across the continent. Whereas above I used an additive index of two measures—interest in public affairs and frequency of discussing politics—in this paper I use only the former since the latter question was not asked on the wave 2 survey. Response-codes on this question ranged from 0-3, with the higher number signaling a greater level of interest in public affairs. To reiterate, such interest in politics is a likely condition, if not a necessary one, for more general political engagement. This follows Campbell (2004:159), who conceives of political engagement as both the conversational and intellectual lure of public affairs, and as an indicator of civic consciousness. Such interest therefore is likely to follow from and reflect a more general sense of national belonging.

Measuring group differences. In wave 2, there is no separate measure of ethnicity as there is in wave 3. However there is a measure of respondents' home language, which is a reasonable proxy for ethnicity given the close association between ethnic identity and language in Ghana. Informed by historical literature and my own qualitative research in Accra, I re-coded ethno-linguistic group into a five-category measure: Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagbani, Ga, and Other (Frempong 2001). I also included a six-category measure of religion: Mission Protestant,

Evangelical/Pentecostal Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, Traditionalist, and None/other (see Takyi et al 2010; Gifford 2004). This coding of religion is also identical to the one used above in the first section of the dissertation.

Ghana has ten major political regions (see figure 1), making a categorical measure of region unwieldy and difficult to interpret. Further, the importance of region is theoretically linked to its geographic proximity to power, rather than any difference in and of itself. Thus, I use a continuous measure of distance from the national capital, Accra, measured by hand and entered into the dataset for each major region.[7] This variable is the average distance from the capital, for each region, between the closest and the furthest point of that region.

Potentially-confounding variables. There are two potential factors that could be reasonably expected to produce observed differences by group that do not reflect the political reality (i.e. lead to Type I error). The first is differences by political party allegiance, which may have emerged as a meaningful line of political incorporation in the multi-party era. Thus, after looking at baseline models of the correlation of each factor (ethnicity, religion, and region) with both outcomes, I test to see whether these differences go away when political party is controlled for. Given that the NPP was the ruling party during this period, and its main challenger has consistently been the NDC, I decided to use a dichotomous indicator of membership in the majority party for ease of interpretation. Individuals were only coded as "1" on this measure if they reported being "close to" a political party and if the part they named was the NPP.

The second potential factor is that conceivably, differences between ethno-linguistic and religious groups could be driven by the dynamics of minority status. If this were true, then we would see more incorporation of certain groups in areas where they are the majority and less incorporation of the same groups where they are a minority. I thus created a measure of whether

[7] This measure was obtained by permission from Alex Weinreb, UT-Austin.

one's own ethno-linguistic group is the same as the modal category in one's district, which is the smallest geographical unit available in the public data. I created an equivalent measure for religion. By this measure, only 17 percent of the sample lives in a district whether they are an ethno-linguistic minority, compared to 52 percent who are religious minorities in their region.

Controls. One's history of accessing social welfare services and their assessment of government performance in this area will likely be influenced by their particular experience of need, as well as the actual presence of social welfare services where they live. I measure poverty according to the "livelihoods approach" (Masanjala 2007; Moser 1996), assessing the ability of one's household to engage in essential functions of living without interruption. I combined measures of how often the respondent's household has gone without food, fuel, water, and medical services, resulting in an index of livelihood instability that ranges from 0-16.

In order to measure actual access to social welfare infrastructure, I use a simple dichotomous measure of rural vs. urban location. Initially, I had constructed a measure of interviewer-recorded presence of social infrastructure, including a paved road, clinic, primary school, police station, and post office. However, this index was insignificant in all models and added little to their explanatory power. There is also significant collinearity within the models predicting differences by region. Thus, I stuck with the dichotomous predictor to capture within-region geographical differences.

I also include a dichotomous measure of sex, a continuous measure of age, and educational achievement as a dichotomous measure of whether the respondent has completed

primary education.[8] All continuous measures (age, livelihood instability, and the two indices of political incorporation) are grand-mean centered to adjust for uneven distributions.

[8] Although this is a rudimentary measure, it reflects the meaningfulness of primary education as a dividing line of social status in Ghanaian society, and is most appropriate for my analyses which do not focus primarily on the role of education (Robertson 1977).

Analytic Plan

Because I am using three separate outcomes and focusing on three different categorical predictors, as well as two important confounding factors in political party and minority status, the analyses involved a large number of models. For each outcome/categorical predictor combination, I ran a baseline model, and then tested the baseline against models that controlled for minority status and political party. I also ran each model separately by wave in order assess whether differences in the overall sample are driven by differences in either wave of the survey. Thus, in the following results section, I discuss the results of all of these models but present only the most significant findings. Since all three outcomes are continuous, models were run using the xtmixed command and estimated using maximum likelihood estimation.

Results

The first few models predict political interest on the basis of ethno-linguistic group. They also look at whether this relationship is altered when we control for ethno-linguistic minority status within the region and membership in the national ruling party, the NPP. Finally, they are run again separately for each wave, to see if there are significant differences in the split sample. Table 2.1 reports these results.

----------Table 2.1 about here----------

Initially, it seems that Ghana's ethno-linguistic groups have fairly equal levels of political interest. Women and those who have not completely secondary education are significantly less interested in politics, and there also seems to be a decline in political interest between waves 2 and 3 of the survey.[9] Ethnic minority status within one's region also appears to be insignificant. However, as model 3 shows, being a member of the ruling party is strongly associated with greater political interest, which supports other research on winners and losers in African elections (Moehler 2009). Further, when party membership is controlled for, there is a slight positive effect of being in the "other" ethno-linguistic group, which mostly encompasses groups living in the far north of Ghana (see figure 2.1).

Some interesting results emerge when the model is run separately on each wave of data. While in wave 2 (model 4) being Ewe, Ga, and in the "other" group is associated with higher levels of political interest, this is not the case in wave 3. In fact, Gas in wave 3 are slightly less interested in politics. Again, it is difficult to attribute this to population-level trends in political incorporation, since 1) the time between waves is fairly short, only two years; and 2) the distribution of ethno-linguistic groups represented in each wave is significantly different. In

[9] It would be ill-advised to attribute this to declines in political interest in the overall population, since the samples for each wave are different. In particular, wave 3 has a larger sample of minority ethno-linguistic groups (i.e. all those other than Akans).

general, minority groups make up a larger percentage of the wave 3 sample than the wave 2 sample. However, looking at these results separately by wave is an important corrective to any quick conclusions we might make on the basis of the first three models. Overall, it suggests that there are no obvious effects of ethnicity on political interest, and also that small differences may emerge in studies are likely to be due to sampling error.[10]

Table 2.2 shows analyses that replicate those in table 2.1, but substitutes the accessing of public goods as the dependent variable. To reiterate, this dependent variable does not measure objective access to public goods, but rather whether or not the individual has *accessed* these public goods his/herself.

----------Table 2.2 about here----------

Once again, being female is negatively associated with this measure while having completed primary education is positively associated. However, there are also stronger differences by ethno-linguistic group. In particular, being Ga or Mole-Dagbani is positively associated, although as models 4 and 5 show these differences are primarily from the wave 3 sample rather than the wave 2 sample. This again makes extrapolation tricky. The mean score on this outcome is much higher in wave 3 vs. wave 2 (.266 vs. .021 on the standardized measure). Either access to public goods dramatically improved over the period of two years or this difference is an artifact of sampling. I would argue that although much of this difference may be due to sampling, since the effects are particularly large in this case, it is *likely* that there were some real differences in access between the two waves that disproportionately affected Gas and

[10]The problem of sampling error in African survey data is unfortunately pervasive, and in this study I try to be realistic about the impact of this problem on the validity of my results. Extreme skeptics may be tempted to disregard survey results from the continent entirely. I do not take this view, but rather believe that real population-level trends—like the results for education, gender, and political party, for example—will show up in this data after repeated checks and adjustments for sampling error. It is the less-significant and less-consistent relationships that we should be more skeptical of.

Mole-Dagbanis. This is especially likely in the case of Gas since they are concentrated in the urban coastal area around Accra (see figure 2.1). Noting that, it is actually surprising that there are not *clearer* differences between groups, or between rural vs. urban areas. The overall picture, then, seems to be *relatively* equal incorporation of ethno-linguistic groups when measured by accessing public goods. Roughly 50 percent (41 percent in wave 2 and 57 percent in wave 3) of the whole sample has accessed all three of these goods (help from police, primary school placement, and an id card). Yet once again, being a member of the ruling party seems to make a positive difference.

In table 2.3, I turn towards religious affiliation as a potential predictor of political incorporation. Although I directly replicated the analyses looking at ethno-linguistic group, there were consistently null results so I present only a few of the models in table 2.3.

----------Table 2.3 about here----------

Religious affiliation clearly has very little direct association with political incorporation by either measure. Although there is a negative coefficient for the "none/other" group, is difficult to know what to attribute this to, since it is small (6.59 percent of the sample) and likely includes foreigners as well as those in fringe groups and those who have adopted secularist viewpoints. Between the major traditions of Ghana, political incorporation seems to be fairly equal, and the same control factors—majority political party, education, and gender—are significant.

When I included the average distance of the region from Accra measure in the next stage of analyses, surprisingly it was insignificant in all models. I also checked this again models which included a 10-category identifier of residence in each of Ghana's major regions. No one region—not even the capital region—illustrated significantly higher levels of political

incorporation on either measure. Thus, geography in its own right appears to play much less of a role in determining political incorporation than we would expect.[11]

A final model for each outcome, shown in table 2.4, assesses which of these three factors—ethnicity, religion, and geography—matter once they are all accounted for. In these models, we continue to see few significant differences between groups, with one exception: Gas and Mole-Dagbanis score significantly higher on the accessing public goods index than Akans (the ethno-linguistic majority).

----------Table 2.4 about here----------

Once again, membership in the majority political party, alongside gender and having completed primary education, is the strongest predictor of political incorporation. This is striking, given that so much of the literature has decried ethnic and regional divisions while promoting a multi-party system. It seems, however, that at least in Ghana, political party membership is more divisive than ethnicity, region, or religion in and of itself. In order to understand this dynamic more fully, in a final model (table 2.5) I assess whether ethnicity, region, or religion is related to membership in the national majority party.

----------Table 2.5 about here----------

Since these are odds ratios from logistic regression models, the coefficients are interpreted differently than in the preceding models. Any value in the second column less than 1 indicates a negative relationship, whereas any value greater than 1 indicates a positive relationship. Here, we see the significant differences by ethnicity and religion that were absent in the models predicting political incorporation directly. All minority ethno-linguistic groups are significantly less than Akans to be members of the ruling party—Ewes, for example, are 76 percent less likely, a huge margin of difference. Religion also matters. Members of the three

[11] These analyses are available by request from the author.

major traditions other than Protestant Christianity—Catholics, Muslims, and traditionalists—are all less likely to be majority party members. These are not huge margins, but they are significant, and they illustrate a new finding that religious identity and party membership in Ghana are linked. It is potentially not surprising, given how religious participation has promoted certain patterns of political engagement in Africa and elsewhere (Campbell 2004; Young 2002; Patillo-McCoy 1998; Sabar-Friedman 1997; Smith 1996; Billings 1990). Nevertheless, it indicates that pathways of political identification in Ghana incorporate both religious and ethno-linguistic signifiers. The importance of the latter has been the subject of a wealth of literature; the role of the former has been all but ignored.

Discussion

Are ethnic, regional, and religious groups equally incorporated into the political system in Ghana? The answer—which may surprise many—is a qualified *yes*. All groups illustrate an equal level of interest in public affairs and an equal likelihood of having accessed important public goods. As noted above, trust networks do not *necessarily* follow ethic, regional, and religious lines; but given the high likelihood that they do in Ghana, various trust networks have been fairly equally incorporated into the political system, net of most other factors. Thus, there is no one hegemonic majority bloc that is more politically-incorporated and that has a distinct ethnic, religious, and geographic character.

However, this optimistic assessment must give way in turn to a new conception of the political problematic in Ghana: the role of political parties. Although direct ethnic, religious, and regional differences in incorporation are not evidenced, this does not mean that political incorporation is equal. Rather, it now follows political party lines. In turn, religious and ethnic differences are significant in shaping political party membership. Thus, the rise of the multi-party system in Ghana has perhaps reshaped but not removed differences in incorporation. Instead, such differences crystallize around party membership. The difference in political interest is more expected and less troubling (Moehler 2009); the difference in public goods access is more worrisome. It suggests that whether or not actual access to public goods is better for those joined with the ruling party, NPP members are more likely to take advantage of key public goods.

Certainly, democracy can function even when political parties overlap with religious, regional, and ethnic cleavages. The U.S. political system illustrates some similar tensions, as in the case of the Religious Right (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Regnerus, Sikkink, and Smith

1999; Bruce 1994). Yet in the U.S. system, such differences in political party membership do not translate into differences in incorporation into the government system. It is hard to imagine a scenario in which Republicans' children, for example, were significantly less likely to obtain elementary school placements. Yet such appears to be the case in Ghana, to a degree. It follows logically from post-colonial historical developments and the widespread reality of clientelism in African politics (Chabal 2009; Cammack 2007; Bratton and van de Walle 1994; Clapham 1982). The establishment of multi-party institutions has not changed the fact that public goods and government benefits are channeled through networks of patrons (who seek votes) and clients (who seek access to social protection and welfare) (Gay 1998). What appears to have happened in Ghana, however, is that the political party is the primary arena through which such exchanges take place.

If such is the case, then we might ask why everyone doesn't just switch to affiliate with whichever party is in power. The answer, I believe, is in table 5. Political parties carry meaningful associations with particular identities. Although many of the practices upholding a clientelistic system are strategic, it is not these strategic exchanges themselves that are the problem but rather the fact that they coexist—and often contend—with dynamics of ethnic and religious belonging. An Ewe who is a traditionalist or a Ga who is Muslim is less likely to be a member of the ruling party, and is likely to strongly resist such membership, because s/he associates the ruling party with the Akan, Protestant Christian, and dominant majority. The dynamics of belonging and political "otherness", alongside the logic of interdependent clientelist exchanges within the multi-party system, produces a condition of political inequality, even absent of patrons showing explicit ethnic- or religious-based preferences. Too often political conditions are attributed to the strategies or prejudices of powerful actors; in the case of Ghana,

it becomes clear that when various individuals act according to their familiar logics of social relations and belonging, in conditions of scarcity and heavy political engineering by external actors (i.e. the IMF, the World Bank), unintended negative consequences and deep inequalities can arise naturally.

This study differs significantly from much earlier work in how it portrays the role of religion in shaping belonging in modern-day Africa. Work that has focused on political divisions and national-level consolidation, mostly in the political science literature, has largely ignored religion. This work seems to assume that religious differences are not as "old" or "deep" as ethnic ones, and thus they are unlikely to matter in political matters. In the first chapter of this dissertation, I believe I made a convincing case that they DO matter. On the other hand, those that have been interested in African religion have associated certain traditions with certain comprehensive political philosophies (i.e. liberation theology in the case of Catholicism, other-worldly and apocalyptic teachings in the case of Pentecostalism, and *jihad* in the case of Islam) that they assume translate directly to specific political approaches on the ground (Meyer 2004; Gifford 1998) Yet the reality is that 1) religion is deeply important in shaping power relations in Africa and 2) how various traditions are enacted and interpreted is deeply influenced by power dynamics in the social context in turn (see Laitin 1986). In the case of Ghana, then, we should neither assume that religion is irrelevant in shaping political incorporation, nor that certain groups are more incorporated and more involved just because they have been elsewhere on the continent. In Ghana in the 2000s, Protestants of all stripes have a political advantage in that they are more likely to affiliate with the ruling party. The dynamic of influence likely has less to do with political philosophies ingrained in the tradition and more to do with how Protestant networks overlap with and support New Patriotic Party networks.

Of course, further complicating this assessment is the fact that at least in theory, the party in power changes hands periodically. In Ghana, the NPP lost control of the government to the NDC in 2008, shortly after these two waves of the Afrobarometer survey were fielded. Do party-based clientelist networks shift in response to such elections in which the ruling party loses control? Would we find that with the NDC in power, NDC members are more interested in public affairs and more likely to access key public goods? Or do NPP members continue to experience an advantage, since the NPP is associated with the ethnic and religious majority? Surprisingly, though much has been written about clientelist politics in Africa, we know almost nothing about the mechanics of it in response to multi-party transitions, as Robert Gay has argued in the case of Brazil (Gay 1998). Many analysts have claimed that Africa's independent, post-colonial governments have been little more than official veneers over the continuing dominance of a traditional ruling class (Bayart 2000; Bratton and van de Walle 1994). Given the recent transition to multi-party systems across most of the continent, however, these assessments must be updated. Lastly, as noted above, such assessments should better incorporate the role of religion in deeply pious countries like Ghana, as a system of ritual practices that bring people together, and thus dramatically affect the arrangement of trust.

Conclusion

It appears that there is not one hegemonic majority bloc that is more politically-incorporated and that has a distinct ethnic, religious, and geographic character. The reality is more complicated. Rather, any individual's degree of incorporation is a reflection of their combination of ethnic and religious associations as well as their geographical location, educational status, and political party membership—and further, all of these factors are intertwined in complex ways. The idea that diverse ethnic groups over large geographical areas combined with the rise of the multi-party system to produce a diverse array of political blocs jockeying for power is not new. Yet this is the first study in the case of Ghana to include religious belonging as a full player in this process. It underscores the importance of religious identity as a gateway to other types of political belonging, and suggests that at least in Ghana, the marginal groups are NOT the Charismatic Independents but rather Catholics, Muslims, Traditionalists, and those of other minority faiths.

Finally, these results indicate a tendency for one's political party to shape one's degree of political incorporation. This is a worrisome development because of the scarcity of public goods in the first place, and because political party memberships overlap with ethnic and religious categories of belonging. Thus, although the clientelist system of political rule may not directly discriminate against certain ethnic and religious groups, the political and social arrangements that exist produce a degree of inequality in political incorporation. Much more needs to be done to understand the workings of clientelist practices alongside moral and cultural dynamics of belonging. Yet my hope is that in this study, I have outlined a way of thinking about religion and politics in Africa that will move research forward beyond simplistic or reductionist assessments of this reality.

CHAPTER THREE: RELIGION AND GRASSROOTS INTEREST IN POLITICS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA[12]

Preface

Extending the findings of the previous chapter, this piece examines the role that religion plays in shaping political interest among African publics in a sample of thirteen countries. Once again, the focus is on understanding what religion means for political association and belonging. This chapter discusses in depth how religion and politics in Africa have been studied in the past, noting in particular that overwhelmingly the focus has been on elites and top-down ideologies. In keeping with the focus of this dissertation, this study highlights how national and sub-national publics—individuals and laypeople themselves—engage with their political structures on the basis of their religious, educational, and political resources. It shows in agreement with earlier work that higher levels of religious participation and higher levels of education are strongly associated with higher levels of political interest across countries. On the other hand, we also find surprising differences between countries, particularly in terms of which traditions—Charismatic/Pentecostal, Mission Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim—are more politically engaged. This piece thus undermines prevailing perceptions of how each of these traditions support or discourage political involvement in a top-down way. Religion in Africa is clearly *not* a uniform, fixed landscape of identities and worldviews, to which we can directly apply the standard typologies of the U.S. and Europe. It is rather quite fluid and responsive to context. This suggests that religious Africans themselves exercise significant agency in how much, with whom, and to what effect they participate in religion.

[12] Co-authored with Alex Weinreb, UT-Austin.

Introduction

Religious organizations are the most expansive non-state actor in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the world's most devout region in the world (Pew 2010). Churches and mosques are widely attended (Norris and Inglehart 2004:57-60; Isichei 2004:171-174). They often make considerable material and time demands on their members (Trinitapoli and Regnerus 2006; Gifford 1994),[13] embedding them in networks and activity. They also provide an array of services and can act as conduits for international aid flows (Manglos 2011; Englund 2003; Hearn 2002), which in the absence of publicly funded welfare systems serve people's material needs as much as their spiritual needs (Trinitapoli and Weinreb 2012; Adgajanian and Sen 2007; Adogame 2007; Becker and Geissler 2007). Finally, recent Afrobarometer data show that religious leaders are generally held in higher regard in SSA than other types of leaders or public officials (Trinitapoli and Weinreb 2012).

It is not surprising therefore that religion influences politics in SSA. What is surprising is that there is little up-to-date, national-level comparative research on how this influence plays out. In particular, a number of important questions about religion's influence on politics at the grassroots level remain unanswered. In this paper, we focus on two: 1) How does religious involvement—net of affiliation—affect interest in the political process? And 2) Which religious groups have the highest and lowest levels of political interest, both within and across countries?

[13] This is in contrast to African states which, for example, collect income tax from only a small minority of salaried workers (Kiser and Baker 1994).

Background

Summaries of religion and politics based on the U.S. and Europe tend to view religion as a source of morals, symbols, and ideologies that bind people together and are utilized to validate political action. Religious symbols can be used to critique the political system because they arise out of an alternative locus of authority (Young 2002; Smith 1996:5-17; Billings 1990). Religious institutions have also been described as pro-democratic, at least where they promote a culture of engagement and responsibility (Ruiter and De Graaf 2006; Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Woodberry and Shah 2004; Stepan 2000; Putnam 2000:66; Warner 1997). In this sense, notwithstanding the historical split between the religious and political spheres in European societies (Bellah 2005; Smith 2003a:1-4; Chaves 1994) some of the latest work sees the two as mutually-supportive. In turn, this harkens back to Durkheim's (1995 [1912]:42-46) description of religion as the ultimate unifying social force, and "most characteristic product of the collective mind" (Sharpe 1986:83).

On the other hand, since the ascendance of religious-based conflict in the post-Cold War era and the rise of religiously-based conservatism in the West (Wuthnow 1988:173ff.), more focus has also been paid to the divisive potential of religion. In the context of "9/11" and the popularity of Huntington's (1993a, 1996) "clash of civilizations" thesis, authors have explored the often contentious potential in strongly-held religious beliefs (Juergensmeyer 2000:6-8; Kurtz 1995:212-214). Religious elites are able to exercise "soft power" over adherents (Haynes 2007:430-432) and thus can co-opt rather than coerce them, extending their authority across political boundaries. Both in the U.S. (Putnam and Campbell 2010:3-6; Wolfe 2005:1-4) and on the global stage (Norris and Inglehart 2004:4-5), there appears to be a growing polarization between the religious and the secular more generally, and in certain cases between Christianity and Islam, that has deep divisive potential.

The tension between religious traditions' divisive and unifying elements presents a puzzle, especially if our aim is to understand the influence of religion on politics. Parsing out that influence is further complicated by the fact that both religion and politics are multi-faceted social phenomena.

Our goal in this paper to focus on the effects of two specific aspects of religious life at the grassroots level: intensity of involvement in a religious group, and affiliations with particular groups in particular country contexts. The mechanism underlying intensity of involvement rests on the claim—made popular by those civil society scholars cited above—that religious involvement augments a person's civic consciousness and more general engagement with the political system. The mechanism underlying religious affiliation, on the other hand, is based on the idea that in diverse societies, religious associations can shape one's civic identity *vis a vis* the "other" (Lichterman 2008). Where affiliation becomes associated with discrepancies in access to political power and recognition, this can result in differential levels of political disillusionment and disengagement (Tilly 2005:125ff.). Herein lies the inclusionary and divisive potential of religious traditions, even within the same polity.

Focusing more narrowly on SSA[14], We see four discrete approaches in the literature linking the religious and the political spheres, two of which we aim to test in our own analyses.

[14] Notwithstanding what has been described as the distinctiveness of the African spiritual worldview (see Some 1998; Magesa 1997; Mbiti 1991), the vast majority of people in SSA are affiliated with one of the two major global religious traditions, Christianity or Islam. Majority Muslim populations extend from North Africa into the Sahel (e.g., Mali, Burkina Faso), then southwards into northern Nigeria, Ghana and Cameroon, and so on. They are also a majority on Africa's East Coast from the almost 100% Muslim Horn of Africa down into Northern Mozambique (Robinson 2004; Insoll 2003). Outside these two regions, the vast majority of Africans are Christians, with the specific breakdown across traditions and denominational identities in any given area reflecting both the identity of the initial mission group – inland Christian missions in SSA began in the 1850s – the subsequent development of African indigenous churches and, more recently, initiatives by Pentecostals and evangelicals (Jenkins 2006; Isichei 2004, 1995; Oliver 1991). Finally, although in a few countries in SSA more than 5% of the population identify as members of traditional African religions – also known as African indigenous religions and "ethnoreligions" – in general, traditional African religious practices and beliefs co-exist with, and have been co-opted into, syncretic forms of Christianity and Islam, with more tension in some denominations than others. Thus, people identify as

The first focuses on church leaders as political actors, noting their moments of mobilization by, negotiation with, resistance to, and protest against, government regimes during the 1980s and 1990s (Gifford 2009; Philpott 2004; Sabar-Friedman 1997; Van Hoyweghen 1996; Boyle 1995; Huntington 1993b:72-85; Fields 1982). The Catholic Church has tended to be the most active on the resistance and protest end of the spectrum, African-Independent Churches (AICs) and Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have tended to be the least active (Meyer 2004; Gifford 1998: 341-348; van Dijk 1992), and Mission Protestant churches (i.e. Anglican, Presbyterian) have fallen somewhere in the middle. This variation is usually explained in terms of church size, links to transnational bureaucratic structures, financial stability, and independence from state authorities.[15]

The second approach treats religious ritual – defined broadly – as an inherently political activity that reflects and responds to the "malcontents of modernity" besetting post-colonial communities (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997; Mbembe 1992). Religion employs a politically-charged set of symbols that can help people re-interpret and therefore subvert the powerful global forces acting on the local community (Marshall 2009:9-15; Ellis and ter Haar 2007, 2004, 1998; Owusu 1989). Not surprisingly, this approach portrays emerging Pentecostal and Charismatic groups in the most potentially political light, though it is easy to extend the argument to certain types of energetic fellowships within older mission churches. In both cases, distinct politically-charged language – some of it apocalyptic – takes place in and through very public media outlets, at least implicitly threatening elite discourse (Marshall 2009:108-127; Hackett 1998; Fields 1982).

Christian or Muslim but still visit traditional doctors, wear amulets, engage in ritual cuttings, or in other behaviors which signal their continued interaction with traditional African spirit worlds (Trinitapoli and Weinreb 2012).

[15] We should note that involvement of Catholic and Mainline Protestant leaders has in some cases had quite negative and non-democratic effects (Flint and de Wall 2008; Gourevitch 1998; Van Hoyweghan 1996).

The third approach treats religion as a key player – sometimes unintended – in the development of civic consciousness, following from the more general literature on the pro-social nature of religious involvement cited above (Woodberry and Shah 2004). This school of thought treats bottom-up processes of socialization, network reorganization, and the exchange of ideas among average citizens as central to the relationship between religion and politics. Many such studies focus on modern education – which promotes civic responsibility –as the major contribution of religious groups (Becker and Woessman 2009; Acemoglu et al 2001; Brown 2000). Other studies portray local congregations as corporate bodies that reorganize local social networks, and are key institutions through which individuals manage risk and regulate behavior (Manglos 2010; Englund 2007; Bjornskov 2006; Garner 2000); or alternatively that allow people to develop civic and organizational skills and experience democratic decision-making (Campbell 2004; Smith 2003b; Sabar-Friedman 1997). In both cases, religion is thought to be instrumental in enriching the public sphere and enhancing the "third sector," motivating people to act in interests that extend beyond clan and ethnic group (Acemoglu et. al 2001; Stepan 2000). We see this as the *inclusionary* potential of religion, its ability to connect individuals to the larger public by expanding their networks and their knowledge of civic issues.

The final approach sees religion as providing a basis for both political mobilization and its inverse, political boundary-making. The result is the disenfranchisement of particular religious groups. We see this as the *divisive* potential of religion, or in other words the tendency for inequality to be deepened along religious lines of difference (see Tilly 2005:125ff.). Curiously, although this potential is a common topic in global surveys, very little work has been done to test its salience in SSA. One major exception is work by David Laitin (1986), who argues in the case of Nigeria why the separation between Christians and Muslims became *less*

politically charged in the debates over *Shari'a* law. The theme can also be found in recent pessimistic assessments of Africa's democratization in which the emergence of ethno-regional political parties—some with a distinct religious identity—sometimes build on preexisting religious differences (Clapham 1993). More generally, although studies of sub-national fractionalization in the region abound (Bates 2008; Fukuyama 2004; Posner 2005; Herbst 2000; Clapham 1993), and they tend to mention the overlap between ethnicity, region, and religion—a product of geographic areas' distinct mission histories – they emphasize ethnic and regional differences over those related to religion.

----------Table 3.1 about here----------

Table 3.1 summarizes the four hypothesized pathways through which religion has affected politics in SSA. The first, which has received the most attention in prior literature, suggests that Catholic and older Mission Protestant denominations will be the most politically involved, given their size, connection to powerful external organizations, and historical dominance. The second, in contrast, suggests that politically charged discourse is what matters, and that it is likely just as prevalent in the Pentecostal-Charismatic and Muslim communities in certain settings. We do not formally test either of these hypothesized pathways directly in this paper, since doing so would require data on religious elites' activities and on public religious media; but our results do have implications for each of them.

The third approach, which we do intend to test, shifts the focus to public opinion and religion's effects at the grassroots. There are two discrete mechanisms associated with this approach. One focuses on education. It suggests that denominational differences in education, in part a product of denominational control over educational systems, could lead to denominational differences in politicization. The other mechanism works through voluntary association within

religious groups. Since these enhance civic consciousness, the degree of religious involvement should be a more important predictor of political interest and engagement than mere religious affiliation.

Finally, the fourth approach, focusing on the divisive potential of religious group association, suggests that there should be strong differences in politicization across groups. These effects would not likely be uniform for a given tradition across all contexts, but rather dependent on differences in education, political incorporation, and the size of the group within a particular country. There are important parallels between these ideas and the politically realist frameworks that Horowitz (1985) and Posner (2005) use to predict where and how different types of ethnic identities become politically salient. The underlying message is that local context matters more than a particular transnational religious identity.

In summary, although we agree that religious leadership and symbolically-charged discourse – approaches 1 and 2 – have played and will continue to play an important role in African politics, we also feel that these two dynamics have received a disproportionate share of scholarly attention. In this paper we look at the other side of the coin: how religion shapes people's interest in politics—a first step to political engagement, as we argue below—and how this varies cross-nationally.

Data and Measurement

We use data from the 2008 wave of Afrobarometer surveys, administered in thirteen countries in SSA to a nationally representative probability sample of adults. These new data allow us to analyze popular political interest cross-nationally, in contrast to the extant literature which is almost wholly based on a case-study approach applied to a limited number of mostly Anglophone African states (Fields 1982; Meyer 2004; Haynes 1996; Gifford 1995; Marshall 2009; Owusu 1989; Paley 2002). [16] These data also give us broad regional coverage across SSA: four of the 13 countries are in West Africa (Benin, Ghana, Liberia, and Nigeria), four are in East Africa (Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda); and five are in southern Africa (Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa). These 13 include most of the countries that featured in the prior literature.[17]

Political interest. Our dependent variable is "interest in politics," which is a likely condition, if not a necessary one, for more general political engagement. In this we follow Campbell (2004:159), who conceives of political engagement as both the conversational and intellectual lure of public affairs, and as an indicator of civic consciousness.

We use an additive index of two measures: "When you get together with your friends or family, would you say you discuss political matters frequently, occasionally, or never?" and "How interested would you say you are in public affairs?" Response-codes to the first question ranged from 0-2 and on the second from 0-3, with the higher number signaling more frequent conversation and a greater level of interest in public affairs. Table 3.2 reports descriptive

[16] There is a growing body of work on political involvement and public opinion at the individual level in SSA (Moehler 2009; Finkel and Ernst 2005; Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2004; Bratton 2003; Bratton and Mattes 2001; Mattes and Christie 1997; Bratton and Liatto-Katundu 1994). Although some of these studies have acknowledged the potential role of religion in shaping voting patterns or public opinion (Takyi et al 2010; Bratton 2003), none has focused specifically on how religion shapes other political outcomes.

[17] In most cases, the Afrobarometer sampling frame was based on the most recent national census. All data were collected in face-to-face interviews. More details about the data are available at www.afrobarometer.org, and in Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi (2004).

statistics for this variable (0-5 range) across countries, as well as for our key independent variables of interest which will be explained below.[18]

----------Table 3.2 about here---------- --------

Religion codes. Afrobarometer survey instruments are more sensitive to local differences in religious categories than other cross-national, population-based studies in Africa.[19] In each country, individuals were asked about the intensity of their religious activity, and were also coded into no fewer than ten different religious groups. This enabled us to develop a new context-specific typology which differentiates between religious groups on the basis of three factors: shared historical origins, mean level of political engagement, and percent in urban districts. Of course, not all the categories in this typology are new. For example, all Catholics and Muslim subgroups were automatically grouped into discrete categories.[20] There is also a standard grouping of Mission Protestant churches, including Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians. For other Protestant groups, however, the results were less standard across countries. The survey instrument's "Christian only" category produced particularly interesting results. In some cases, they made up 30 percent of the sample; in others, there were only a few such individuals. Although "Charismatic" was unfortunately not a separate category on the survey, recent studies of the Charismatic movement in West Africa have noticed their strong tendency to eschew denominational labels and refer to themselves as just Christian

[18] The Cronbach alpha score for the two variables was a mean 0.69 across the 13 countries, with a minimum of 0.55 (Lesotho) and maximum of 0.72 (Uganda). We also performed multiple post-tests for measurement invariance, including country-specific confirmatory factor analyses, which revealed consistent results among all groups except Pentecostals in Lesotho and Pentecostals, Zionists, and "Other" in South Africa. Since these are small groups (in the case of Pentecostals) or groups that are not central to our analyses, we considered measurement invariance to be an insignificant problem on the whole. Results of all tests are available from the authors.

[19] In contrast, the Demographic and Health Surveys typically use a simple 4 category coding (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Other).

[20] Unfortunately, the data inhibit our ability to identify real differences among Muslims. Although African Muslims in general are largely Sunni, there are also important pockets of Twelver Shi'a in Nigeria, Ismaili Shi'a in Kenya, and Ibadi Muslims in Zanzibar. Likewise there is also considerable variation with the majority Sunni population.

(Marshall 2009; Gifford 2004). Since the "Christian only" groups were particularly large in those countries where this movement has been the most visible, such as Ghana and Nigeria, we generally interpret this category to align with the newer Charismatic movements arising in the late 70s.

Two other categories, "independent" and "evangelical", were usually small and often looked very similar in terms of political engagement and urban-rural characteristics, so they are in most cases grouped together. "Pentecostals", on the other hand, are understood as members of the older Pentecostal denominations such as Assemblies of God or Church of God in Christ that have been active on the continent since the 1920s and 30s (Anderson 2001:167-168), and in every case were treated separately.[21] Finally, affiliates with Zionist, Apostolic, or the United Congregational Church of South Africa churches were grouped as African-independent churches. This label is admittedly problematic, given that most Pentecostal, Charismatic, Born Again, or evangelical churches are both African-initiated and independent from foreign church bodies. Nevertheless, we use this term for continuity with earlier literature, and to refer to a particular early wave of African-led churches, most common in southern Africa, that incorporate elements of African traditional religions to a greater degree than other church groups (Meyer 2004).

[21] Anderson (2001) suggests that terms such as Pentecostal, Charismatic, Evangelical, and Born Again take on different meanings in different contexts and cannot be treated as interchangeable (see also Marshall 2009; Gifford 2004). These differences in name reflect substantial differences in genealogy and modern-day practice in some cases but not others. Our typology recognizes these cross-national points of comparison and contrast as much as the data allow.

Analytic Approach

We analyze the data in five steps. First, we identify denominational differences in our indicator of political interest (treated as a continuous measure), using our new typology of religious groups. Our second analysis then focuses on the third pathway—the inclusive potential of religious involvement net of affiliation—by assessing the effects of active religious membership on political interest. A third analysis gauges the extent to which denominational differences in political interest work through denominational differences in education, further assessing the salience of this third pathway. In all three of these analyses, estimates are from linear regression models with standard errors adjusted for non-independence within sample clusters and using Afrobarometer-provided sampling weights.

Our fourth and fifth analyses are a bit different. Noting the variation in the initial analyses *between* countries in which religious groups are more politically-interested, we explore possible explanations in contextual dynamics. Here we include measures of political party representation, urbanicity, the size of one's religious group relative to the population, the country-level degree of religious involvement, country-level overseas development assistance (ODA) and the year of transition to multi-party democracy. In order to conduct these analyses, we merged the individual-level Afrobarometer data with two newly-created datasets. The first provides province-specific electoral data in three countries—Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi. This allows us to compare the relationship between religion and political interest where respondents are affiliated with the dominant political party in one's region as opposed to a minority party. The second includes a series of country-level measures for all 13 countries, which we describe in more detail below.

Additionally, we use two controls to which we give little detailed attention: gender and urban vs. rural area of residence. Each of these may be an important predictor of political interest and worthy of closer attention. Given the scope of this paper, however, we do not discuss their effects other than to say that they were fairly uniform across all analyses. Women reported significantly lower levels of political interest than men in all countries, net of controls, and the effects of urban residence were almost always weak or insignificant.

Results

----------Table 3.3 about here----------

Baseline effects. The results in table 3.3 show right away that no single religious affiliation is associated with higher levels of political interest all, or even most of the time. While in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda, Mission Protestants report some of the highest levels of political interest, they are just as often less politically-interested than other groups, particularly Catholics and Pentecostals. The Christian only and evangelical/independent groups seem to be highly variable. In some cases they look similar to each other, and in others not; in some cases they are the least politically-interested, in some cases the most. Muslims, where present, also vary quite a bit relative to other religious groups, and it is hard to say much about their tendencies across countries. On the other hand, Catholics and Mission Protestants usually closely match each other in levels of interest. Finally, countries themselves vary significantly in their mean levels of political interest.

Religious involvement. All Afrobarometer respondents were asked to assess their general level of religious activity using one of three codes: active members of their religious group, inactive members of their religious group; or active *leaders* of their religious group. As Table 3.1 shows, the number of those who are active varies from about 30 to 73 percent between countries.

Figure 3.1 shows the net effects of being actively religious across all thirteen countries. These effects are net of religious affiliation, education, rural/urban residence, and gender.

----------Figure 3.1 about here----------

In all countries except Tanzania and Ghana, there is a strong, positive and statistically significant association between religious activity and political interest. Our analyses also showed that while in some cases including the indicator of religious activity resulted in smaller

differences between religious groups (e.g., Uganda, Nigeria, South Africa), most of the time these differences persisted, and in some cases even got larger (Mozambique, Malawi, Kenya, Botswana, and Tanzania). Thus, being an active member of a religious group is an important *positive* predictor of political interest. It also explains part of the observed variance in baseline differences between religious groups, though it does not eliminate those differences.

In order to understand whether the effect of religious activity for given denominations varies across countries, we specified a series of models with interaction terms between religious affiliation and active membership. Figure 3.2 presents results of these models, across those countries in which that particular religious group is present. For these graphs, we focus just on Muslims, Catholics, Mission Protestants, Pentecostals, "Just Christians", and Evangelical/Independents. Also, because overall sample sizes in most countries are relatively small, we indicate where religious groups are particularly small (and thus results should be interpreted cautiously) by the intensity of each line's shading. Specifically, the solid black lines indicate groups that constitute more than 20% of the national sample, and the very light grey lines indicate groups that are less than 5%. Mean effects are weighted using 2010 data from the Population Reference Bureau (http://www.prb.org/pdf10/10wpds_eng.pdf), and are indicated on each graph by a thin black line.

----------Figure 3.2 about here----------

Although the baseline effects of being religiously active on political interest are in almost all countries positive, there are some cases where the active religious members of a given group have lower levels of political interest. However, these few cases are fairly evenly distributed across religious groups such that no one group exhibits a systematic negative effect of active religious membership on political interest. In most cases, the interaction slopes for Pentecostals

tend to be steeper, indicating that for Pentecostals being an active member has an even stronger positive effect on political interest than for other groups. Pentecostals and "Just Christians", however, also show the greatest amount of between-country variance in political interest for both active and inactive/non-members. For Mission Protestants, the effects are almost uniformly flat (Kenya, Botswana) or positive but usually not very strong. This is also true for Muslims in East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania are flat), though in West Africa (Benin, Nigeria and Ghana)—with its longer history of Muslim reformist movements—the positive slope is fairly steep.

In summary, we see strong evidence that religion has inclusionary potential: the more actively-religious are more interested in the political process. We think that this mechanism is driven by religion's general enhancement of civic consciousness. It is equally clear, though, that this generally-positive effect varies widely between countries. We explore country-specific contextual factors further later on.

Education. As discussed above, one of the avenues through which religion is said to affect politics in SSA is through formal education. Yet the complex long-term effects of mission schooling have been notoriously difficult to assess (Brown 2000). We cannot address how the initial development of the mission school system shaped later political outcomes. Instead, we focus on how education shapes political interest among individuals today and on how, if at all, this effect varies by religious group.

Our modeling strategy is identical to the one used above, substituting primary education completion for active religious membership. We use primary education because of the small numbers of people who complete higher levels of education across Africa and because in most countries, primary education is widely available, though not always financially accessible,

especially in the aftermath of Structural Adjustment Policies (Lloyd, Kaufman and Hewett 2000:497).

The baseline effects of education on political interest across our 13-country sample are overwhelmingly strong and positive, consistent with the assumed relationship between education and political engagement (Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2004). When we look at these effects separately by religious group, however, more complex patterns emerge. This can be seen in Figure 3.3.[22]

----------Figure 3.3 about here----------

Completion of primary education is an even stronger predictor of political interest overall than active religious membership. This is particularly true in countries where the average level of political interest at low levels of education is low (i.e. South Africa, Liberia, and Namibia). Yet exceptions to this pattern should also be noted. The first is a country-wide phenomenon: the effects of education on political interest in Lesotho are negative for all religious groups (Catholic, Pentecostal, Evangelical/Independent). All other negative effects are denomination and context-specific. Outside Lesotho, they include Muslims in Nigeria, Catholics in Liberia, Mission Protestants in Ghana, Pentecostals in Mozambique and Botswana, "Just Christians" in Ghana and Namibia. Across our 13 country sample, the only denomination for which there is no observed negative effect of education on political interest (outside of Lesotho) is the evangelical/independents. In regards to dispersion across countries, once again it is wider for Pentecostals and "Just Christians" than it is for other groups. Also, for Mission Protestants and Muslims, there is much less variation in the degree of political interest among the more educated than among the less educated, suggesting an interesting equalizing effect of education.

[22] As in Figure 3.2, the shading of the lines indexes the relative size of the religious group in question within their home country.

Finally, there are some suggestive patterns related to differences in group size. Where Muslims make up a significant portion of the overall population (i.e. in Benin, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Tanzania), their level of political interest is relatively high at low levels of education, and the effects of education on political interest are quite small or nonexistent. In contrast, in countries where Muslims make up a smaller percentage of the population, their level of interest is lower and we see much stronger gains in political interest for those who are more educated. Among Mission Protestants and "Just Christians," the effects of relative size look almost the reverse. Where these groups constitute a relatively large percentage of the population, they tend to have relatively low levels of interest, but also relatively steep positive returns in interest with secondary education. Where they constitute a relatively small percentage, they tend to be more politically-interested, with no uniform effect of education on political interest whatsoever.

In summary, the support for this second inclusionary pathway is mixed. In most national settings, having more education predicts more political interest. But this is not the case across all countries or in all denominations.

Country-level factors. If the effects of religion and education on political interest depend more on country-level factors than regional trends, what particular country-level factors matter the most? For example, why do some countries like Liberia, South Africa, and Namibia have such low baseline levels of political interest and dramatic gains from education while others such as Kenya, Ghana, Benin, and Tanzania have higher baseline levels and more divergent gains? In order to provide some initial answers to these questions, we reshaped the Afrobarometer data, turning each major religious group within each country into a discrete observation (N=68). We then attempted to predict estimated mean effects of education and being religiously active on

political interest. In other words, group-specific slopes of the interaction terms from prior analyses were transformed into our dependent variables.

Two of our country-level independent variables are aggregated from the Afrobarometer dataset: percent completing primary education and percent who are active religious members in the sample. All of the major religions discussed in the above two sections (Muslim, Catholic, Mission Protestant, Pentecostal, Just Christian, and Evangelical/independent) were coded 1-6, and each country was assigned a code of 1 through 13. We also included the percentage that each religious group comprises of the total country sample, in order to look at whether group size is associated with political interest.

Other country-level variables were constructed from external data sources. These include percent urban, HIV prevalence, year of transition to a multiparty democracy, life expectancy, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).[23]

----------Table 3.4 about here----------

Table 3.4 shows selected results of OLS models fitted to these data (all models adjust standard errors for clustering by country). The best-fitting model predicting the estimated *slope of religious affiliation by primary education* includes the size of the religious group, total ODA, and year of multiparty transition.[24] In countries with more recent transitions, the gains in political

[23] Percent urban, HIV prevalence, and life expectancy were all accessed from the CIA World Factbook website (www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook). Year of transition to multiparty democracy was obtained from Africa Elections Database (africanelections.tripod.com) and checked against basic country profiles found on Wikipedia. GDP is a common indicator of the size of a country's economy, and a 2009 list for all countries is available from the CIA World Factbook.(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP). ODA is compiled by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and is publicly available on their website (www.oecd.org). For our dataset we used the average yearly ODA from all sources over the period from 2005-2007, in order to adjust for unusual yearly spikes or declines in assistance.

[24] Among the other variables, proportion urban, HIV prevalence, life expectancy, and proportion of total sample completing primary education were not significantly associated with either interaction slope. GDP showed a significant positive effect on the slope of religion by primary education, but was not included in the final model because of its strong collinearity with total ODA. Also, separate models were run to test differences in slope by country and religious group, with no significant effects. Because of the small-N, we also bootstrapped all models

interest from primary education across religious groups are larger than in countries whose transition to multiparty democracy was earlier. Gains in political interest from primary education are also smaller among religious groups that make up a larger proportion of the total population, indicating that there is potentially an effect of minority religious status on gains in political interest from education. Lastly, in countries that have received higher average levels of ODA from 2005 to 2007, gains in political interest from primary education are greater as well.

In predicting the estimated *slope of religion by active membership*, what is most revealing is the lack of significant effects by the independent variables in our dataset. In particular, there are no significant differences between religious groups across countries, indicating that no given group has stronger political interest among its active members than any other group. The only variable which successfully predicts the slope (seen in Table 3.4, model 5) is the proportion of the total country population that reports active membership. This implies that the higher the proportion of religiously active in a given country, the shallower or more negative the estimated slope of religiosity on political interest. In other words, religious people tend to be more politically interested when they are fewer in number.

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reported in Table 3.3 (100 iterations, 80% subsample). Estimated effects and variance of all variables shown remained stable (significance<5%) with the exception of year of multiparty transition.

Discussion

In this study, we have attempted to paint a clearer picture of a complex subject: the role of religion in shaping grassroots political interest in sub-Saharan Africa, a region that is highly religious, highly diverse, and rapidly-changing. Although our intention has been more to stimulate research in this area than to close the debate, there are several key findings. The first is simply that there is no one religious tradition that is always more politically interested at the grassroots level. Nor are there any that are uniformly apolitical. Individuals associated with groups whose leaders have been instrumental in bringing about political change in certain countries, such as Catholics in Kenya and Malawi (Englund 2000; Sabar-Friedman 1997), do not demonstrate higher levels of political interest across countries. This is an important result. By signaling a disconnect between patterns of political involvement among the religious leadership and political interest among lay membership, it should temper sweeping assessments of the relationship between one's religious affiliation and one's political orientation. An individual's level of political interest is the result of multiple factors—including but not limited to religion—that are *country specific.* The effects of religion itself are also country-specific. Thus, future studies should not ignore religion in discussing public politicization, but neither should they assume a direct correlation between elite political activity and public political interest.

A second key result is that, as predicted by the civil society literature cited earlier, active religious membership usually promotes interest in the political system. Although there are a few counter-cases, and the relationship is weaker in more religiously-active countries (Table 3.4), the general trend of this relationship is clearly positive. In light of other studies (Ruiter and De Graaf 2006; Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Bjornskov 2006), we think that the explanatory mechanism is related to religion's enhancing of general civic consciousness.

On the other hand, within-country differences in religious group affiliation do at times result in different levels of political interest. This is our third key result. We see a number of group differences within countries that indicate that religious identity is a meaningful indicator of political inequality, *especially* when it combines or overlaps with other dividing lines, such as education. Although religion may promote civic consciousness through education—the inclusionary effect that we discuss above and do see in our data—it may also work through educational *differentials* among religious groups to enhance political inequalities, which we also see in these results. On the other hand, although there may have been strong educational differences between mainline and independent Christian groups in the past, today these differences are slight.[25] The greater differences are between Christian and Muslim groups. Yet even this depends somewhat on a third factor: the size of the religious groups relative to each other. For example, there appear to be systematically smaller gains in political interest from education among those affiliated with larger groups (see Table 3.2), indicating that educated religious *minorities* are among the more politicized subpopulations. Where Muslims in particular are a smaller minority, the gains in political interest from primary education are large. Given Muslims' generally lower educational levels in SSA, and the recent influence of global politicized Islamic ideologies in the region (i.e. Cruise O'Brien 2003; Quinn and Quinn 2003; Bratton 2003), this suggests that a Muslim identity is a marker of political-economic difference that motivates political interest, but most profoundly when it is combined with educational opportunities.

The effects of group size on gains in political interest from education (table 3.3) also have important implications. The religious marketplace school has argued that diverse religious contexts lead to greater competition between groups, leading to greater innovation, and greater

[25] Ancillary analyses on this question are available by request from the authors.

religious involvement among individuals overall (Stark and Finke 2000: 218-258). An alternative explanation arises from our analyses. It is possible that this phenomenon is driven more by the dynamics of minority status and the resulting impulse to assert interwoven politico-religious identities. In other words, religious groups may develop a sense of being politically "embattled", especially when political and moral questions intertwine (Smith 1998). More religiously-diverse markets have a greater number of religious minorities, but the experience of being a religious minority is bound up in an identity developed through the dialectic of public discourse and self-representation. Herein lies the link to political interest. A given level of political interest is one of the ways in which groups enact their religious identity in this competitive religious environment. Where the religious market truly is free (e.g., there is no profound physical or social danger involved in converting from one religious tradition to another), there may even be some endogeneity here. That is, a religious group's perceived level of political interest or their particular political stance will attract some people and repel others (i.e. Hout and Fischer 2002). Either way, these processes have implications for understanding both political mobilization and the long-term success or failure of religious groups, particularly where religious identity overlaps with other important markers of identity, as is the case in SSA.

Finally, we find that even though Catholics and Mission Protestants are not always the most politically-interested groups in a given country, they tend to show more similarities across countries than their independent counterparts. Mission Protestants and Catholics also tend towards the mean levels of political interest, while other Christian groups can in many cases be highly aberrant.We believe that the most likely explanation for this is related to differences in bureaucratic structure. Although the local leadership of all Christian groups in SSA came under primarily African control following political independence (Robert 2000), Catholic and Mission

Protestant groups have retained stronger ties to international bureaucratic structures, which can provide input, and guidelines or policies for action, in given political situations. As a result, they retain a degree of uniformity not present among Pentecostals, Charismatics, or evangelicals with fully independent origins. In turn, this suggests that in attempting to develop better religious typologies, future surveys should consider churches' degree of "independency" (Englund 2003; Maxwell 1999) (i.e. the extent to which a church has arisen independent of foreign missionization and support) and the history of mission church development in a given context. Further data on the history and patterns of mission church arrival in each of these countries would be a promising addition to this dataset and a jumping-off point for further study.

Conclusion

We assert three central claims. The first is that no one religious group is generally more or less political at the level of grassroots interest in political affairs. Rather, religious affiliation affects political interest in combination with other contextual factors such as education, degree of religious activity, the size of one's religious group, and—by extension—the history of relations between religious groups, political parties, and the state in a given country. Second, we find strong evidence for inclusionary effects of religion, in that the more religiously active are more interested in the political process and, we would expect, have a higher level of civic consciousness. Finally, we also find evidence that in some cases, religious group differences are associated with inequalities in political interest, and thus may at times have a divisive effect. This is especially true when they map onto educational differences and religious minority group status. Both these factors promote political interest among *most* groups, but among other groups they appear to have the opposite effect, indicating a process of political marginalization.

In this study we have not dug in depth into country-specific histories of how educational systems, various religious groups, and political parties have interacted with each other and the state. This is clearly something that future analyses must take into consideration—albeit in the context of global relations—if they want to more fully understand individual-level politicization in particular national contexts. At this stage, however, the speed of recent religious and political change in SSA has meant that the relationship between those two spheres is poorly understood, especially at the grassroots level. Highlighting some of the systematic regularities in that relationship – while also tempering the generalizability of some older patterns – is the main contribution of the comparative analyses presented here.

CHAPTER FOUR: CHOOSING A CHURCH: RELATIONAL AGENCY IN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AT HOME AND ABROAD

Preface

Both of the preceding chapters have suggested that in order to understand how religion shapes belonging in Africa, we need to consider context, agency, and the dynamics of building social ties through participation. In other words, we need to look at micro-interactions between religious Africans themselves. Yet survey data analysis alone cannot accomplish this. In the following chapter, therefore, I bring original ethnographic data to bear on the topic. Previous literature on religion in general, and particularly religion in Africa, recognizes the importance of religious-based ties but tends to ignore the fact that people can and do *choose* those ties. Religious identities are thus malleable, and religious-based trust networks are continually being re-made. Extending this argument even further, I suggest that although being religious is motivated by spirituality, experience, belief, and culture—all of the factors that show up most commonly as explanations—choosing *between* religious congregations and organizations is a relationship-driven process. It is motivated by the need for relational intimacy, a fundamental motivator of human action; and it is accomplished through emotion-laden social and religious ritual.

This work also puts the African "crisis of trust" in a new perspective. Africans can and do trust others, because they must. In the context of religious participation, they also trust across boundaries of nationality and status, since trust enacted in interpersonal exchanges requires a degree of inequality in the network. Certainly, the challenge is greater for those with less status—recent migrants, the single and uneducated, and women. The difference plays out in how strategic and careful they need to be in choosing a network and building trust. Making such

religious choices in turn becomes an avenue for exercising agency over ones integration into society. This argument subtly overturns implicit understandings of religion as a force of tradition and bureaucratic, top-down authority in the modern world, and in particular Africa. It portrays religious Africans as relational agents, working within structural constraints to build trust, re-shape identities, establish belonging, and aspire to a better life.

Introduction

Today's migrants from West Africa are professionally-driven, elite relative to their sending communities, and often highly-educated. This group is no longer negligible in size. For example, the population of Ghanaians in Chicago alone is estimated at 30,000, and roughly 12 percent of the entire population of Ghana lives abroad (Akyeampong 2000; Peil 1995). While the political discourse surrounding migration implies an image of the "typical migrant" as non-English-speaking, uneducated, poor, and desperate, West African migrants clearly do not fit this stereotype. In their socioeconomic characteristics they are more similar to migrants from South Asia (Rudrappa 2004), coming to the U.S. to take advantage of job opportunities and higher education.

They are also quite religious. Sub-Saharan Africa is a continent primarily split between Muslim and Christian constituencies, where traditional religious practices also continue to thrive (Weinreb and Trinitapoli 2012; Robinson 2004; Meyer 2004; Gifford 1994). In West Africa in particular, huge locally-initiated Charismatic congregations have sprung up in the past 30 years, attracting young people in droves to their dynamic services (Marshall 2009; De Witte 2005; Gifford 2004; Hackett 1998). They have also spread through the diaspora to urban centers overseas (Adogame and Spickard 2010; van Dijk 2004). In Chicago today, there are dozens of such congregations, some of which are branches of churches back home and others of which are completely new variations on the familiar model.

In this ethnographic study, conducted both in the capital of Ghana and the Chicago Diaspora, I focus on the dynamics of agency, network-formation, and ritual participation at work within West African Christian congregations. Given their unique position and needs as professional migrants, as well as the importance of religious participation to modern African life,

I ask: how do West Africans in the U.S. decide where to go to church? This topic is analogous to other forms of voluntary association that come to define identities and reshape social networks, such as party membership (Auyero 2000; Gay 1998) certain professional groups (Desmond 2007; Wacquant 2004; Clark 1994) or protest movements (Young 2002; Beisel 1990; Billings 1990; McAdam 1988). It enlightens our understanding of how social ties and their associated identities are formed through ritual practice, both within designated group spaces and in numerous social interactions throughout the week. It also counters a deterministic view of migrant incorporation that portrays migrants' outcomes solely as the result of macro-level economic forces and meso-level social structures. Finally, it shows us that by the act of making friends, individuals act on and alter those meso- and macro-level realities.

All of these points fit squarely within a strongly relational sociology (Mooney and Manglos 2012; Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Emirbayer 1997), that views agency as existing in joint actions, emotionally-charged and ritualistic, that take place in particular social contexts (see also Collins 2005; McAdam 1988). Building on earlier work, I use this study to advance a theory of *relational agency*, which avoids the pitfalls of both structurally-deterministic and individualistic ego-driven models of human life. Within this perspective, regular joint participation in religious activities is not an epiphenomenal or parochial topic, but a key basis of social structure and belonging, and thus has extensive political implications. The study fits within a research agenda on the intersections of the political and the religious based in relational, micro-interactional sociology; and suggests that these dynamics precede the ways in which religion is normally assumed to influence political life (i.e. elite political positioning, church-organized grassroots protest, or morally-charged social movements) (Ellis and ter Haar 2004; Young 2002; Patillo-McCoy 1998; Gifford 1998; Smith 1996; Billings 1990). Religious

participation in the modern world is a key basis for “trust networks” (Manglos 2011; Tilly 2005: 43-44; Warner 1997), in large part because of its voluntary and malleable qualities that make it particularly responsive to relational agency.

Literature Review

African cosmopolitanism and the crisis of trust. Relationships formed through religious participation can be understood as a form of "particularized trust" (Fafchamps 2006), or in other words trust in another that is built on their particular relationship to oneself, the history of that relationship, and their particular characteristics. This type of trust is contrasted with "generalized trust", which is defined as trust that is interchangeable to others in the same society and is built upon bureaucratic and legal sanctions. Personalized trust becomes arguably more important for individuals when generalized trust in the wider society is weakened; and the modern African society such as Ghana exemplifies this process (Marshall 2009; Fafchamps 2006; Fukuyama 2004; Bratton and van de Walle 1994; Clapham 1993; Comaroff 1991). Ethnic boundaries crisscross national ones, due to arbitrary colonial zoning agreements; traditional family structures have come into sometimes violent conflict with colonial models of gender roles and family life; and rural-urban divides deepen as geography determines accessibility of scarce public resources and political representation (Bates 2008; Posner 2005; Fukuyama 2004; Herbst 2000; Bayart 2000; Clapham 1993; Feierman 1985).

Personalized connections based on non-transferrable trust (i.e. to one's family, long-time friends, school mates, co-religionists, and co-ethnics), thus continue to form the foundations of African social solidarity, although transactions between impersonal others certainly occur out of necessity. Further, this lack of generalized trust, which makes personalized trust so important to the individual, paradoxically makes the establishment of new relations of personalized trust even more difficult and delicate. Migrants from Ghana are in a particular state of transition, both geographically and in terms of social status, and the connections they make and maintain can be determinant of whether they achieve their goals. Thus, the significance attached to the formation

of social ties in intensified, both because of the African post-colonial heritage and the process of migration. This need for social connection—and the potential risks inherent in such connections—is then played out in immigrants' choice of religious congregation. Relative to nationality and ethnicity, which have flexible and often contentious meanings, religious associations in Ghana are more voluntary and thus more expressive of one's own preferences. O the other hand, they are also more structured and enduring, given the powerful civic presence of religious organizations. The congregation therefore becomes central to one's experience, as an anchoring point for those living in the transnational space between Ghana and the U.S. (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

As noted in Chapter one, in some ways Ghanaians are representative of the overall African population, but in other ways not. Their educational status and occupational prestige are higher, as is their average yearly income (Table 4.1). On the other hand, both the Ghanaian and the larger sample illustrate trends towards mobility and a shorter period of stay in the U.S.

----------Table 4.1 about here----------

On the basis of this data and Ghana's particular history,[26] it makes sense to view Ghanaians in the U.S. as a cosmopolitan, professional elite. Although there are still those who struggle to achieve their goals and experience financial strain, still their position is elite relative to other blacks in the U.S. and other immigrant groups. As I will show in more depth with the qualitative data, this status entails both high aspirations and a certain degree of freedom to choose their post-migration locations, professional trajectories, and social groups.

Understanding cosmopolitanism is relevant for investigating the church choices of first-generation migrants because it helps us to avoid characterizing immigrant congregations as being

[26] See appendix B for a full historical account of the geographical area that is now Ghana, dating from the late 1600s.

primarily about retaining a connection to one's own "authentic" home culture. It contradicts a view of religious or ethnic identities as concrete, static, and determinant of where one ends up going to church. The meaning of cosmospolitanism as used here implies a global awareness and a long-standing engagement with diverse cultures and peoples. When Ghanaian immigrants decide where to go to church in Chicago, a diversity of experiences, cultural elements, and objectives come into play.

Religion and Immigration. In the U.S., religious participation is widespread among nearly all major immigrant groups (Mooney 2009; Chen 2008; Johnson 2007; Brown 2001; Warner 1998; Tweed 1997).[27] However, neither the sociology of religion literature nor the mainstream immigration literature has given much empirical attention to immigrants' religious *choices*. In the sociology of religion literature, it is common to think of religious "demand" as "static," asserting that religious participation is a rational and strategic enterprise for individuals that answers their ultimate questions of existence and provides certainty in an uncertain world (Stark and Finke 2000; 83ff). Religious congregations and organizations grow and shrink based on their ability to appeal to the uniform religious "rationality" of individuals (Stark 1996; Finke and Iannaccone 1993; Finke and Stark 1989). Further adjustments to this theory have focused on the nature and structure of one's social networks as the reasons why individuals convert or re-affiliate (Smilde 2007, 1996; Sherkat and Ellison 1999; Sherkat and Wilson 1995). Thus, "most people, most of the time, have accumulated a network of relationships that they regard as valuable. When people base their religious choices on the preferences of those to whom they are attached, they conserve (maximize) their social capital" (Stark and Finke 2000: 118-119). According to this principle, basic propositions on who will attend which kind of congregation—based on their social networks and the nature of their social capital—can be put forth.

[27] For a comprehensive summary of the religion and immigration literature see Cadge and Ecklund 2007.

The problem with this perspective is that the malleability of social networks is downplayed. In reality individuals—depending somewhat on their social position—are constantly working on their networks, making new friends, keeping up with old ones, or alternately cutting ties (Vaisey and Lizardo 2010; Bidart and Degenne 2005; Suitor and Keeten 1997; Suitor, Wellman, and Morgan 1997).[28] Yet rather than being motivated by the maximization of individual benefits, making new ties usually occurs through a more complex interplay of ritual and consciousness. Ties are created through rituals that are successful, in the sense that they induce positive emotions in the participants (Vaisey and Lizardo 2010; Collins 2005:47-52). Individuals are mainly aware of "liking" or being drawn to the other, rather than strategically assessing the potential of the other and choosing that tie. In other words, individuals are always choosing new ties, their choices occur through emotionally-charged ritual interactions, and such interactions occur in designated spaces and times which should be the object of ethnographic investigation (Burt 2005:12; Emirbayer 1997).

Conversations about agency have been perhaps even less common in the literature on immigrant assimilation. Although rational choice models have been used to explain why migrations are made in the first place (Massey et al 1993), agency seems almost to disappear upon arrival. Instead, the "context of reception" in the host country, the characteristics of the sending country, immigrants' education level and skill set, and racial segregation are cited as the main determinants of how and whether immigrants become incorporated into the wider society (Thomas 2010; Bail 2008; Portes 2007; Portes and Rumbault 2001; Akyeampong 2000; Portes and Grosfoguel 1994). The social networks immigrants' possess are also central to their success (Garip 2008; Loukaitou-Sideris and Hutchinson 2006; Boyd 1989). Yet if social networks

[28] Notably, Stark and Finke (2000: 137-138) suggest as well that the agency of individuals in choosing their religious ties has been underplayed, but do not go much further to correct this problem.

matter, and if they fluctuate constantly throughout the life course, then we would also expect migrants to be aware of this and to manipulate their own networks. We would expect them to strategically make new friends, and seek out spaces in which to do so.

Fortunately, several new studies have emphasized agency in particular areas, specifically in choosing co-ethnic residential patterns (Fong and Chan 2010; Logan, Zhang and Alba 2002), spouses (Milewski and Hamel 2010), or stages of migration (Paul 2011). This study continues in the same vein, arguing that the same dynamics of preference, social networks, and identity-formation relative to the sending and host society are at work when African immigrants choose their religious congregations. Just as the new economics of labor migration (Massey et al 1993; Stark and Bloom 1983) brought interdependent decision-making to the forefront of why migration decisions are made in the first place, in this study I propose a focus on relational agency in understanding incorporation. Recent immigrants, older immigrants, and natives are co-agents in creating—or inhibiting as the case may be—the social ties that connect these communities. Religious congregations, whether mainly-immigrant, mono-racial, or highly-diverse, are spaces in which such relational agency is enacted. Therefore, by choosing their congregations first-generation migrants have a measure of control over their own trajectory of incorporation. Their joint religious participation in turn creates those lasting social ties which shape belonging in a political sense, whether the result is deepening or minimizing social boundaries (Warner 1997). For the immigration literature, it is not enough to show that incorporation is "segmented" (Portes 2007), and varies in response to "contexts of reception" (Cornelius 1995:11-12) or "proximal hosts" (Mittelberg and Waters 1992). We must also understand how individuals *respond* to their given racial and socioeconomic categories as well as their initial measure of social and cultural capital. Taken together with other work (Mooney

2009; Levitt 2009; Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002), this study suggests that one of the main ways they respond is by making new connections through religious participation.

Relational agency and trust networks. Although sociology is fundamentally about relations between human beings, the discipline has arguably struggled with how to conceptualize human life in a truly relational way (Emirbayer 1997). Even the literature on social networks, although vast, has done much more to describe the objective structure of networks than the processes through which networks shift and change (*ibid,* 305). On the one hand, many theorists—like those cited above from the immigration literature—seem to assume individual outcomes are the direct result of complex social forces or network structure (Smith 2010:220ff.). On the other hand, there are those who seem determined to deify the individual rational will, like those cited from the religious choice literature. Yet a third perspective, which I call "strong relationality," (Smith 2010; Slife and Wiggins 2009; Fowers 2005; Slife 2004; Taylor 1985; MacIntyre 1984), espouses a quite different view of human motivation. While many sociologists see human life as deeply inter-subjective and socially-constructed at the most fundamental level (Stets and Carter 2012; Smith 2010:199-206; Vaisey 2009; Swidler 2003; Goffman 1959:17ff), a strong relationality perspective goes one step further and places *relationship* itself as the motivating good behind human action. It sees joint human action as directed ultimately towards two ends: the co-development of trusting relationships with others and the co-creation of moral orientations (i.e. perceptions of what is good or virtuous) (Smith 2010:25ff; 2003:7-26). In exercising agency, human persons are not calculating, strategic, autonomous, or oriented towards the maximization of their own psychological, emotional, or material gains. Rather, we are motivated towards intimacy with others and various perceived goods, and our perceptions of those goods are produced through an iterative process of self-reflection and social interactions. Agency is

relational in that it exists in a *process* of emotionally-charged, ritualized interactions with others in particular social settings (Collins 2005: 3-6, 47ff; Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Emirbayer 1997).

"Trust networks" are the primary social ties within which such relational agency is enacted. They are those relationships within which communities engage in their most "consequential enterprises" (Tilly 2005:43-44). Although trust has been understood and measured in a variety of ways (Offe 1999; Warren 1999; Misztal 1996), ultimately trust is what people *do*: they engage in significant, long-term tasks together. They therefore put what matters to them most—again, morality and relationship—"at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, and failures of individual members" (Tilly 2005:4). The most fundamental trust networks tend to be family units. However, because of the disruptive nature of migration, and its potential for isolating and dislodging people from their intimate relations and socially-upheld moral orders, the family cannot always fulfill this function. Thus, other networks based in educational experiences, religious participation, or shared interests come alongside their family connections as an additional basis for building trust networks. Indeed, "chain-linked, long-distance migration provides a privileged laboratory for study of transformations of trust networks" (*ibid* 2005:52). This study highlights the processes through which such transformations take place, focusing on the relational agency of modern-day migrants.

Methodology

I collected ethnographic data over three summers and numerous short trips in between. My data from Accra was collected in summer of 2009, and the Chicago data was primarily collected in summer 2010, January 2011, and summer 2011. The Chicago site was selected because it is one of the major hubs of Ghanaian immigration to the U.S., and it was a city where I already had a few contacts with the Ghanaian community. My work in Accra focused on the headquarters of Beacon Ministries, an international Charismatic organization started in the late 1980s. This prior trip to the national and religious "homeland" turned out to be incredibly valuable in gaining entry to the Chicago branch in 2010. Most of the this summer in Chicago was spent simply showing up for Sunday and midweek services, getting to know the 40 or so members of this Beacon Ministries branch, and getting involved as a volunteer, mostly with the choir team. Towards the second half of that summer, I collected 10 interviews with members and leadership of the church. Informants were identified through informal conversations, and they were primarily those that I had already gotten to know the best and who showed the most interest in assisting with my research. In January of 2011, I visited the church again, catching up with those I had met the previous summer and taking more fieldnotes.

The following summer, I worked from my existing networks both within and apart from the Beacon Ministries branch in order to expand my interview sample. I conducted another fifteen interviews, which represented leaders and members of nine different churches. I also continued attending and volunteering extra time through the week at Beacon Ministries. Because of the nature of my research question, this time spent building relationships with Beacon members was not supplemental data, but rather crucial in understanding the process of attending a new church, interacting with existing members, engaging in collective ritual, and feeling the

cyclical emotions of awkwardness, pleasure, intrigue, discouragement, and excitement that come with making new friends. Engaging in church rituals was also key to understanding how ritual works to enhance feelings of belonging and intimacy among members (McRoberts 2004).

In all, I conducted in-depth interviews with 42 informants, 30 of those in Chicago and 12 in Accra. There were also numerous less-formal conversations and follow-up interviews that happened in casual settings. It is typical for church members in Chicago to give rides on Sunday mornings to those without cars, and so in my first summer there—when I was without a car—I was often picked up for church. In my second summer, when I did have my car, I was often asked to give rides. I learned a lot about people in these 30-40 minute drives, and there were at least ten others in Beacon Ministries apart from my interview sample who I knew quite well by the end of this time. It was often easier to learn about people in these informal settings than it was to schedule formal interviews, given that so many of them worked multiple jobs, worked and went to school, and/or had significant family obligations.

Although this study relies heavily on participant observation and interviews, it is not a "traditional" ethnography, which in the minds of many involves long periods spent in the same small locality, language-learning, and a clear boundary between "home" and "field." As I have conducted this research, there has been no such clear delineation. By the end, I had had travelled a lot, frequently accessed online content, and spent time in correspondence with church members while not officially in the "field". Thus, I experienced my own "translocative" experience in the process of conducting research, and my method reflects the sense in which the lives of Ghanaians in Chicago transcend single localities (Johnson 2007; Smith 2005; Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999). Yet my goal is also very similar to that of a traditional ethnography: to describe behaviors in real time and space and to get at the meanings behind those behaviors. I

follow established evidentiary criteria for ethnographic research (Katz 1983, 2001; Becker 1998), giving more weight to conduct I could observe versus reported behavior, and to behaviors reported by many observers versus those recounted by only one.

My approach also combines elements of "reflexive sociology" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) and "The Extended Case Method" (Burawoy 2009), which make very similar assumptions about the role of the qualitative sociologist. Both attempt to bridge the gap between positivist and interpretivist approaches in slightly different ways. Bourdieu and Wacquant argue for a two-step process that first establishes "objective structures" (i.e. social relations) that define the external constraints on human action and secondly uncovers the "categories of perception and appreciation" that serve as the internal logic of individual actors (p. 11). The science of human practice becomes a task of drawing connections between external structures and internal schemata. Further, they reject both the elevation of certain methods over others and theorizing that is too far abstracted from actual human experience.

In this study, the first section roughly corresponds to this task of establishing "objective" structures. I describe the historical relationships between Africa and the Western world, between Christianity and West African culture, and between today's Charismatic churches and West Africa's other religious organizations. I am thus discussing social "fields", which in reflexive sociology are defines as "a set of objective, historical relationships between positions anchored in certain forms of power" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 16). In the following sections, I describe as much as possible the internal schemata of how migrants choose their churches in Chicago, which reveals itself through observable patterns of behavior and assisted self-reflection. In this portion their "habitus" will become the focus, understood as "historical relations

'deposited' within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation, and action" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 16).

Burowoy's (2009) perspective is slightly different, in that he wants to recognize two different types of scientific approaches—the positivist and the reflexive—and claims that reflexive science is unique in that the researcher cannot fully remove his/herself from being part of the subject under study. Nevertheless, his description of reflexive sociology very much aligns with the approach described above. What he offers in addition to Bourdieu and Wacquant is an elucidation of the specific value of the case-study method. I therefore follow his methodological lead in using the in-depth case study method to extend theoretical perspectives further into new social fields.

As a final methodological note, I wish to move slightly beyond both of these versions of reflexive sociology, because I think they do not go quite far enough in recognizing the moral implications of trying to explain a social phenomenon. Although Bourdieu and Wacquant reject theory that is not a reflection on "actually existing", and Burowoy has been an active proponent of "public sociology", I believe that they also underplay the significance of understanding social theory as a *practice,* that reflects our own emotions, reflections, self-doubt, and positionality as we go through the research process *and* has the potential to alter the social setting in which we are participating. In this work, I have considered myself a full participant in the church organization I use as my case. Certainly, I don't align myself with much of what is said and done in the organization, and I am probably not their "typical" member. Yet the organization in fact contains many non-sociologists who participate on the exact same terms. Not everyone involved is a clone of the organization's leadership. They are there for a variety of personal reasons and put up with certain things that they don't necessarily like in order to be there. Sometimes their

views change over time, as mine certainly did in a variety of ways. Thus, I don't take my position as a social researcher to be qualitatively different than any other participant. The main difference is I am also engaging in dialogue with academic theories of religion, politics, and immigration, I am writing a lot of things down, and I am trying to be thorough and somewhat systematic in my observations.

Because of this, I plan to make it a point to show up in the resulting narrative as an active player. Rather than simply acknowledging the importance of reflexivity, and hedging my arguments on the basis of my potential biases, I will take advantage of the ways in which I have been both an insider and an outsider as some of my most useful tools. My insider status of having been raised close to a Charismatic Christian environment earned me a type of trust that would have likely been impossible otherwise; as one informant said, "I am telling you the truth because you are my colleague at church." My insider status among the women allowed me to relate with them on practical levels of shared experience, and thus allowed me to enter into their thoughts on the migration process more fully than a solo male researcher would've been able to. At the same time, I was an outsider to most in that I was not married and did not have children of my own, though as I will show this is not as unique an experience among this population as it is in more rural parts of Ghana, for example. As a professional and a student, I found myself as more of an insider than I had anticipated; I was able to relate to the pastor and his wife in Chicago on the level of graduate education and balancing professional goals with family aspirations. Ultimately, of course, I was an outsider on perhaps the most important dimensions: I am white, I am not an immigrant, and I am not Ghanaian or African. Thus, I take intellectual advantage of those moments as a researcher when I most "felt" my outsider status, and paid attention to those moments when my self-consciousness dissipated. With this population in

particular, analyzing my own experience of movement between being “in” and being “out” has, I believe, the potential to provide insight into the emotional motivations of those I am writing about. I believe that the moments in which my *emotions* (anger, frustration, pleasure, confusion, and joy) were most engaged in the fieldwork process are the moments that provide the most telling data.

Results

Church choice as a relationship-driven process. In Accra, major Charismatic congregations dominate the public sphere. Their prominent leaders, now cultural superstars, frequently make huge claims about the Charismatic church's ability to renew, re-organize, and revitalize African society (Marshall 2009; de Witte 2005; Gifford 2004; Meyer 1998). They have attracted young people in droves, often recruiting them through school-based religious clubs like the Scripture Union. In my room at the University of Ghana in Legon, I often heard Charismatic prayer services both small and large taking place on campus, even during the summer months. A number of my informants at Beacon in Ghana had come to the organization through such clubs and prayer meetings, occurring in dorms, dining halls, and public spaces. This dispersed grassroots structure is balanced out by an impressive main branch, which in the case of Beacon Ministries hosts tens of thousands of attendees every Sunday morning. Although many of these are indeed full-fledged members of the movement, many are also spectators and religious consumers, who come for the music, the public teaching, and the celebratory social atmosphere.

These organizations are characteristically international, often making global church growth their most central campaign. Since roughly 12 percent of Ghanaians now live outside Ghana (Akyeampong 2000), "Ghanaian society" itself is a transnational milieux. The "context of religion" is matched by the "context of migration" in the southern coastal areas. As a rule, everyone I talked to in the area of Accra was a regular church attendee and had relatives or friends abroad. Thus, these structures support and sustain each other. The result is that the religious context of Chicago for Africans echoes the religious context of Africa's major urban areas: numerous start-up Charismatic congregations, advertisements for all-night prayer vigils

posted in public areas, and a free religious market where individuals and families seek out an ideal congregational environment.

In Chicago, my interview sample represented members and pastors of nine different churches. Every one of these churches was described to me as "multicultural", though they varied greatly in size and in the diversity of the groups represented. I was looking for Ghanaian churches in Chicago, but in terms of self-representation "Ghanaian" churches did not exist. Pastors who had started new churches all claimed that their goal was to reach out to diverse groups; individuals almost all stated that their ideal was to go to church with diverse groups of people, rather than just Ghanaians; and I even heard stories of churches splitting in the past because some thought they were being too insular. Overwhelmingly, my respondents had a cosmopolitan and inclusive sensibility. I found several individuals that claimed to avoid fellow Ghanaians, but none that claimed to avoid Americans. This makes sense, given the migration history of the typical Ghanaian in the U.S. They are usually urbanized to a degree, more highly educated than average, professionally ambitious, and possessing the necessary connections and financial resources to qualify for student, work, or diversity visas.

The fact that the Christian congregation sees its own role as a center of culture and socialization is shown in the following quote from a pastor of Chicago:

> It's not easy leaving your life in Africa. They [the church members] need somebody that can really be there for them, because it gets to a point that it can be very difficult…So we call them, we have prayer lines by phone, we reach out to them, so I think that behavior has really been effective in their lives.

The way one young woman put it, "When you move to a new place, you might not have friends or know where things are, but one thing I think I can find is a church and go worship." Another man who had been in the U.S. since 1996 and had visited a number of different

congregations, both Ghanaian and not, compared the role of the church in Ghana vs. Chicago this way:

> In Ghana…well, here you get closer [to your church] because you don't have much going on beyond that. I have friends at work, and my relatives [here in Chicago], but we see each other only once in a while. You get closer to the people you go to church with. In Ghana, I know my neighbors, anyone I went to school with is right there and I can see them, so my closest friends are not necessarily in the church.

In another man's words, describing his church: "Even if I suddenly lost every member of my family, I would still have 100 people that would give me a place to stay if I needed it."

Although no one knows exactly how many new Ghanaian- or African-led Charismatic congregations exist in Chicago, I was quoted estimates of around 40-50 and one particular office building in the Uptown neighborhood housed eight such churches, by my count. Additionally, there were several others meeting in other buildings in the same neighborhood.

Yet there was also geographical spread to the marketplace as well—one church visit took me as far away as Bolingbrook, one of Chicago's far southwest suburbs. The Beacon Ministries branch met in West Town, near the downtown loop, but before that had met in Shaumburg, a northwest surburb. This reflected the reality that Ghanaians themselves lived all over the city, with some concentration in the Uptown neighborhood and on the south side. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show two maps, the first of the Chicago city limits and the second of the wider metropolitan area, that identify selected homes of informants with circles and congregational meeting places with triangles.

----------Figure 4.1 about here----------

----------Figure 4.2 about here----------

The *number* of churches somewhat belies their similarity. I interviewed four pastors and one pastor's wife who had started new congregations in the past several years, and nine different congregations (mostly Charismatic) were represented among my informants, in addition to a number of other churches that they had visited at one time or another. Generally they espoused the same doctrines, were engaged in the same practices, and had the same objectives for outreach, social support of the community, and church growth. The story of one pastor, Isaiah, was typical. He first came to Chicago in 2002 with "a call" (i.e. a belief that God was intending for him to eventually be a pastor), but did not initially come as a pastor or to start a church congregation. He did a number of different jobs, and in 2004 took an associate pastor role in another local Charismatic church:

> I was commissioned as a regional pastor, and I was overseeing one of the churches on the south side, then by the leading of the Holy Spirit, I began to go to from church to church…then so I started the church with my wife and my daughter, and one other person, and after four and a half years, this is the one we started with three people.

When I interviewed him, he said about 200 people attend the main church on an average Sunday, and there were already satellite branches of the church in the suburbs of Bolingbrook and Waukegan. They preach mostly in English, and have two services on Sunday. In the morning is the English service, and then in the afternoon at 4:30 they have a "worker's service" for those who work on Sunday mornings and cannot get to church. That service is in English and French. When I asked if the church was mostly Ghanaian, he claimed that "actually Ghanaians are the least, even though I am a Ghanaian." Rather, the members are "mostly Africans from all different countries, and some African Americans." He clearly stated that his goal is for it to be a multicultural and international church.

The other pastors I interviewed espoused essentially the same goals and described their services as "typically Charismatic", meaning lively singing, some speaking in tongues, Bible

teaching, and an altar call. The scheduled programs at Isaiah's church were also typical, and closely matched with the weekly activities at Beacon Ministries: a midweek service, extended Friday prayer services, regular training sessions for those who want to be leaders, and monthly meetings of women's groups, youth groups, and men's groups. Like most of the other Ghanaian Charismatic congregations in Chicago, they did not meet in their own free-standing building but in a suite in a larger office building. Having his own office next to the main meeting room indicated that he was more successful than some; but the space where the congregation met was similar to others I visited. Rows of office chairs were arranged neatly facing a stage, with a podium at the front and center, a set of drums and a keyboard to one side, and a large banner with the name of the church on the back wall. There were also a number of colorful flowers and ribbons everywhere, and I noticed on my visit that a number of the women milling around after church were wearing uniforms of grey suits and bright orange sashes. Other women wore traditional Ghanaian suits, and a number of men wore dress shirts in African fabrics. In the office space just between Isaiah's office and the main hallway, there were several bookshelves packed with recordings of Isaiah's sermons on burned discs in white slipcovers. When I attended, I waited in a long line of people hoping to talk to the pastor for various reasons, and observed a lot of milling in and out, laughing, and conversing in various languages. The atmosphere was social and relaxed: no one seemed in a hurry to get home or get anything done. Isaiah himself, when I first saw him, struck me as quite young but also incredibly confident and charismatic. In our interview he was forceful and direct—a clear go-getter in a perfectly-tailored grey suit.

When asked why he thinks people come to his church, Isaiah responded, "The truth. They like the truth, there is no compromise, everyone that wants to know God can find the truth here." Yet as noted above, there is little difference between what is taught in his congregation and what

is taught elsewhere. His more specific descriptions of this truth included those injunctions that characterize *all* Charismatic churches: conservative sexuality, avoiding alcohol, spending significant amounts of time in church work, reading the Bible, sticking to the basics of conservative Protestant theology. Thus, although this shared worldview and spirituality supports West African religious participation *in general*, it cannot be used to explain how individuals choose between the dozens of congregations that are available to them under this general umbrella. As I observed people in the lobby socializing extensively after services, and interviewed more and more church-goers themselves, I began to see that what differentiates congregations is the nature of relationships between participants, or in other words the size and diversity of the trust network represented. Those who participate in Isaiah's congregation, as well as those who participate at Beacon Ministries, cite "the people" in those congregations as the main draw.

Later in our interview, Isaiah described in detail what the congregation does to facilitate close relationships between members. These relationships are illustrated in the exchange of material support on a formal level:

> The church has [a] welfare [program], that we take care of people. So if somebody loses their job, or if somebody is sick, we help them…Cause in this America, if you fail to pay your rent, you are out…All of that is supported in-house by donations from members, we don't take any grant or anything from outside.

When I asked him to talk more about the welfare program, and if they always have enough to meet everyone's needs, his answer revealed that informal inter-member support and the formal programs of support are intertwined:

> We turn away when we have to, but in times when people need to be helped, even if we don't have [enough], we can make it public, we can come together, and there will always be someone who can help. People have a place to stay, things like that. The church is a community in the community.

I then asked if the church has a lot of people who have had trouble finding jobs, and he replied in the same vein:

> Yes, we do…apart from praying for them, we ask each other to help each other, if you know of someone who is hiring, let people know…We know our people. When you come, we can direct you to go here, do this, do this, and you will be taken care of.

Initially, I might take this to be exaggerated. As an entrepreneurial leader, he wants me to be impressed by how smoothly and efficiently the church runs. Yet while I cannot speak to the exact truthfulness of his claims regarding his church, I did find it to be true that such networking and material support takes place regularly within Ghanaian churches. The quote above ("Even if I suddenly lost every member of my family, I would still have 100 people that would give me a place to stay if I needed it") is one illustration of this. I also saw it in practice in Beacon Ministries. One woman in the church, whose mother had died the first summer of my fieldwork, was given an undisclosed amount of money from the church, collected publicly on a Sunday morning where she was not present. During the second summer of my fieldwork, the same thing happened for another woman, and a few of the members even traveled to the funeral in the Virginia/D.C. area.

The extent of actual money that flows through trust networks in the immigrant church should not be overstated, since by all accounts it is minimal. Rather, what it does is symbolic: it demonstrates the closeness of the relationships to those within them and provides needed periodic boosts in the direst situations, when one is jobless, evicted, sick, or suffering the death of a family member. One young man put it clearly that really, the church "cannot give me money." Rather it gives "some sense of belonging." It provides him with people to confide in. He continued by saying that things have also changed for him since joining the congregation because "I am able to accept life the way it is." He said it was hard for him to describe, because

sometimes these things are “very emotional”, but he is “now able to relate to life on a much more mature and optimistic note.” He used to be very cynical, when things would not play out the way he wanted them to. He says that now he can meet people at church who are doing very well, but went through even worse things than he did in the past, and so he is encouraged.

My fieldwork in the Beacon Ministries headquarters—a congregation of roughly 30,000 people—revealed their repeated emphasis on building relationships within the church. This occurs on multiple levels, and is formalized in the writings of the church’s founder. Initially, visitors who come with a friend or alone are greeted warmly, directed to a seat in the large auditorium, and after the service invited to a special first-timers reception with cake and soda. In the smaller branches, they will also usually be visited that week by one of the pastors. One young man I interviewed described his experience in one of the smaller branches of Beacon Ministries this way:

> When I went the first time I was surprised that church would have so much life, really…I had never seen that before…I was in a Presbyterian church which was quite big, and you hardly get to meet anyone to ask you how are you, how are you doing, I mean unless let’s say you are related to the person, maybe your mommy’s friend who can come up, but then, someone you don’t know from anywhere…[walking up to you and saying] ‘How are you, how are you doing, when did you join, I’d like to know your house, I want to visit you,’ that kind of thing. So I was a bit surprised, wow, this church is so nice. The first day I attended I spoke to the pastor of the church, he spoke to me, asked my name, asked where I live. And then offered to come and visit me, which he did.

Although this type of personal connection is more difficult to maintain in a congregation of thousands, most of those I talked to had actually joined through smaller branches and then attended the headquarters when they could, because by that time they had a personal investment in the larger organization itself. They usually maintained their close relationships in those smaller branches, and in interviews they cited the close relationships they developed in their small branches as the reason they were drawn in beyond the first visit. One young woman I spent

quite a lot of time with had a small accident towards the end of my stay, and her pastor was the first person she called, stating that he was “like a papa to me.” I was also told by one of the assistant pastors that the founder deliberately modeled church structure according to the cell group model of David Cho’s Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea. In this way, the congregation was able to maintain a sense of intimacy between members while still having the influence, energy, and celebrity of a church of thousands.

Given the public presence of Charismatic organizations like Beacon Ministries in Ghana, and the huge numbers of people that are not members but listen to their radio programs and attend their events, we can conclude that the religious marketplace in Accra is a “buyer’s market”, where individuals feel free to shop around and take advantage of religious products. The young people I talked to were overwhelmingly drawn to make their own church choices, even at quite young ages. The young man quoted above who was visited by the pastor after his first time at the church was 11 when he decided to become a member there. Although there were stories of older relatives attempting to keep them in the “orthodox” (i.e. Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, and Presbyterian) churches, these young adults stated that ultimately where they go to church is a matter of personal preference and their elders need to accept that. Thus, my argument that church-going is a matter of choice and that church choices are driven by the formation of social ties extends to the context of Accra as well as the Ghanaian immigrant community.

Moving from Ghana to the U.S., however, does enhance at least one aspect of this religious framework: namely, the importance of establishing social relationships in general and in the church choice process. This is especially true for young adults that migrate alone, and for those who have fewer resources with which to navigate the host community. In the migration context, the relationship between social status and the process of building trusting relationships

can be more closely examined. For those with less social status, the development of trust is both riskier and potentially more rewarding, since they have fewer resources to substitute for social support but also less ability to recover from breakdowns in social trust (Offe 1999).

The importance of finding people to trust, the role of the congregation as a primary source of trust networks, and the way in which the stakes are increased for those with less status is shown in story of Sandra, a young woman who moved from Ghana to Chicago in the middle of my fieldwork. As a woman who had only recently moved to the U.S., even within a congregation that was almost entirely black African she was relatively low status, because within the community status and resources increase with the length of one's stay. Sandra was in a vulnerable phase of migration, and was particularly needy of social support. She had a husband and child that were back in Ghana, she was staying in a crowded apartment with relatives and was thus desperately looking for a new place, she had no job prospects, and she was pregnant with her second child. When we met for our interview, she was working on getting someone to co-sign her apartment lease, since she had absolutely no credit.

Sandra was one of the most initially wary of my informants, but also the most frank by the end of our meeting about the frustrations of the immigrant situation. She noted towards the end of the interview that the only reason she agreed to talk to me was because she saw the way the other congregation members responded to me and thus knew that I was someone she could trust. She hesitated to sign the consent form for the interview, but by the end was much more willing and explained that she had to be very careful about who she trusted. We talked about the system of credit here, and how she was wary of taking her money to a bank because she didn't know how to protect herself from predatory business practices; but she also knew enough to understand that if she never uses banks or credit, she won't be able to have the credit she needs

for basic things like getting an apartment. At one point she said in frustration that even when Africans can get the education they want to get, in looking for jobs "we have to compete with you guys…and you don't trust us."

Ultimately she confessed that her husband is not comfortable with her being here, and often tells her he thinks she should return. The only reason he lets her stay in the end is because she has the church—Beacon Ministries—as a source of support. When he called her during our chat, she told him she was with a sister from the church, and told me when she got off the phone that it made him quite happy and satisfied. Otherwise, he would have asked her for all the details of where she was exactly and who she was with, presumably to make sure she was safe and with someone trustworthy. The fact that I was a fellow participant in the congregation served as the indication that I was such a trustworthy person.

Building trust through social interaction. Gaining in social status does not eliminate the need for trust, especially since from a strongly relational perspective, everyone in a trust network benefits from the intimacy that is built. Because both parties get something out of a successful trust interaction, and because the relationship itself is the goal, then inequalities in power can actually make the relationship even deeper and more meaningful. Yet inequalities within the trust network also make the relationship initially riskier to enter into for those with less objective resources to contribute. Overcoming this risk requires work, specifically engagement in various types of social and religious rituals. Since religious congregations are characterized by well-developed ritual practice, once again this provides evidence of the religious community as one of the primary avenues through which such risks to social trust can be overcome.

The informal and formal interactions supporting the sense of trust and support among those who are happy in their congregations were most accessible to me in the context of Beacon

Ministries. One of these was simply the initial friendliness of the people there, who were eager to know all about me and how I found the church on my first visit. Of course, as a white woman I stood out—but my impression from interviews is that other committed members had received the same treatment early on. A young man, Gift, who had been a recent transplant to Chicago and attended a Beacon Ministries back in Ghana, got the number of the pastor from the Beacon Ministries website, called it, and the pastor told him that someone would come and pick him up for church that very week. He also complained about another congregation that he attended once that by contrast, was very unfriendly: "The pastor was talking about having new church members, but no one came up and talked to me. I told my roommate [who had brought him there] afterwards that I didn't see how they could get new church members if they weren't friendly." At the point that I met him, Gift was already a committed and regular attender. By the end of my fieldwork, he was the leader of the choir, had become a taxi driver, and would often spend two hours before church taking his cab around the city and picking people up.

Over my research, I began to see how important this ritual of giving rides was for the congregation. The following fieldnote excerpt, taken on a day when I was attending a choir rehearsal in early January 2011, is a good example of how the mutual support of giving rides and assisting each other is a value that trumps convenience.

> Fieldnote exerpt, January 8, 2011. Just after 2, I got a text from Benjamin saying that the rehearsal had changed to 4….He pulled up about 4:30, and I walked out and got in the passenger side. He explained that he had been helping a friend move all day, and then had taken him to the airport because he was moving to Houston. He said, "He is also a church member, Peter, do you know him?" And I said yes, I had met him. He apologized for the rehearsal being delayed, and said that he had been up working [driving his cab] since 2 AM this morning, and it had been very, very slow. He said that then he had to spend time taking a friend to the airport, and he couldn't charge his friend for that. We then started talking about how that was something different between Ghanaians and Americans. Ghanaians will never take payment from a friend for something, but (in his words) "Here even if your mother watches the kids, you will pay her." I said yes, it was a very different way of going about doing things. He said that even in this "rigid" environment in the

> church they still have to help each other, and "keep things free and relaxed." I asked him if he ever went to another church in Chicago, and he said that he had visited two other churches, though he didn't remember their names. He described them both as African, with mostly Nigerians and Ghanaians. When he went there he couldn't really see himself fitting in with the people there. At Beacon, he feels like the difference is the love that people have for each other. I asked if those other churches were a lot bigger, and he said yes, and that he guesses that being a smaller church it is easier to give everyone good attention. Even though he had more friends at those other churches than he had at Beacon, he chose to go to Beacon because of the love of the people. He hadn't known anyone there at first, but he just got to know them afterwards. He likes it being smaller, but of course that doesn't mean that he doesn't want the church to grow. He definitely wants to see it grow and see new people come into it.

There is a lot in this excerpt that demonstrates Benjamin's experience as a migrant, the importance of mutual support with others in the community (expressed in the giving of rides for free and the help with moving), the relationship-driven nature of his choice of congregation, and also the tension between the kind of bonding ties that are possible in a small church and the somewhat-contradictory desire for a large church (which I will discuss more fully in the next section). Whether a small or a large church is preferred, however, the underlying principle—that church choices are driven by relationships—is the same.

The act of giving people rides in order to "keep things free and relaxed" is, in this way, a routine behavior that builds trust among those sharing the group space. Certainly, this quote has connotations of resistance to the American way of understanding time, since the congregation is one of the few places these Ghanaians come to each week that runs according to patterns that are comfortable to them. I saw repeatedly that the Beacon Ministries leaders made efforts to encourage the congregation to run according to a more predictable and "rigid" schedule, but over and over again people would fail to comply. At first, this seems from an (admittedly biased) American point of view to reflect a lack of value for timeliness and structure. As I spent more time in the congregation, however, I began to see what it was that they were often doing that keep them from coming to meetings on time (i.e. chatting on the phone, spending time with their

families, oversleeping from having been at a funeral until 2 AM the night before, picking up people for church, getting snacks for after the service, etc.). I started to see that it was not that they did not value timeliness, but that they valued the completion of these social rituals more. In the quote above, Benjamin makes the implicit connection himself between the giving of rides and *the meaning* of that practice: the expression of love between members.

Even those more traditionally "religious" practices which occur in Charismatic congregations, such as speaking in tongues, singing, and extended teaching from the pulpit can be understood as rituals that build ties of trust. Most of the actions people engage in during the services are highly energetic and embodied. As people gradually convene in the space, those who are there already pray loudly over each other and pace the room, often shouting repetitively to God. Once enough people are present, the leader of the prayers welcomes the pastor to the stage, who then welcomes the people in their seats, and "invites"—almost always using that word—the praise team to come forward. The praise team of four or five young adults would then come up to the stage, and using microphones, would sing along loudly to an audio-recording of upbeat, pop-style worship songs. The rest of the congregation would also be completely on their feet, often times dancing outright, and always singing loudly so that it sounded like even more people were in the room than actually were (see figure 4.3).

----------Figure 4.3 about here----------

After twenty minutes of this, the pastor would come up, thank the praise team, and then begin preaching; but his preaching would involve pacing the room, moments of impassioned outbursts, and loud vocal responses from the congregation in response. At the end, there would be an offering, but this again is a ritual designed to connect individuals to the larger collective. Individuals who had brought their "first and best" (i.e. a tenth portion of their paycheck) would

be invited to the front of the room and to stand in a row on the stage. The pastor would then say a personalized blessing over each of them, going down the line. This would almost always be followed by identifying which members of the congregation had birthdays that week, and then bringing them to the front and singing the birthday song to them.

Apart from the practices occurring in the time and space of ritual services, the very way that people present their selves to each other instills *trust* and confidence between those in the group. Especially in Beacon Ministries, one indicator of trust is to carry the accoutrements of middle-class American life. One Sunday, for example, the pastor preached off of his iPad, which he showed off proudly as "my new toy." Not everyone in the congregation is well-off. Some still struggle jobless, working long hours, and just barely getting by. Yet in the space of the congregation, portraying oneself as financially stable (particularly if one is the pastor) is important in instilling trust in others there. It illustrates that one is not likely to be manipulative or overly-taxing on the group's resources. One man in Beacon stated this dynamic in relation to the leadership clearly:

> In Beacon, you have people who are well-accomplished, have been successful in other areas…and you see there has been a lot of sacrifice for them to do what they are doing, so for starters you know this guy isn't here to take my money, because he could make a lot more money doing what he was doing before…. so you know these are good people who don't need to do this for the money, it says a lot.

The pastor at Beacon is a full-time physician, and does not make a salary from the congregation, which is the typical model for Beacon branches in the U.S. Over and over again, I heard this mentioned in preaching and in conversation as a sign that the pastor could be trusted, that he was not involved solely for the purpose of making money. He often told the story of how he first moved to the U.S. and got a very comfortable job as a physician in rural Iowa. When his good friend in the organization asked him to consider moving to Chicago to pastor the church

there, it took him about two years for him and his wife—a nurse—to find good jobs and he took a major pay cut. When he told this story on Sunday mornings it seemed to communicate to new visitors and regular members that he was a good man, who could be successful in the "secular" world but also make sacrifices for the good of the religious community.

Questions of language and dress also come into play as the foci of symbolic discourses about trustworthiness. One of the key debates is between doing services in English vs. traditional African languages and between Western vs. African dress. As noted elsewhere (Stevens 2004), the issue of language is often couched in terms of evangelism, and most major African Charismatic churches in Chicago conduct their primary services in English, although some also conduct alternate services in the traditional language. This issue even resulted in a church split within the oldest Ghanaian charismatic congregation in Chicago, where the new group felt that the establishment was not doing enough to make the service accessible to non-Ghanaians. One of my informants attends at this new church, and he explained that the pastor founded it because "his vision was to bring all the other countries together, and also to spread the gospel to everyone, and so he decided to go this way and embrace all the ethnic groups, Asian, African, and American." Yet when I interviewed the pastor and several members of the original church, they noted that their own goals were quite similar. Getting deeper into my fieldwork, I started to feel that these strategies—the discourse about outreach, the choice of English for services, the use of international Charismatic worship songs—were not so much for potential outsiders but for the people in the church themselves. In other words, they were indicators of the trustworthiness of the people in the church, suggesting that they could provide connections *and* support since they presented themselves as in alignment with "American" as well as African lifestyles.

This became clear to me through several examples from Beacon Ministries. Over the course of my fieldwork, I realized that Beacon Ministries was probably on the far end of the spectrum: not only was everything done in English, the speaking of Twi was banned from formal services (though this rule was regularly broken). Figure 4.4 is a photograph showing myself along with two informants at Beacon, all dressed in the typical American business-casual style of the congregation.

----------Figure 4.4 about here----------

There was also a rule against wearing traditional African clothes among those in the choir or doing anything on stage during formal services. Early on in my fieldwork I witnessed a very uncomfortable exchange between the choir leader and a woman who had been singing in the choir for some time but often wore a suit made in Ghanaian fabric. He informed her, somewhat sheepishly, that the rule was technically that she was not to wear traditional dress in the choir. She was offended, and argued, “This is what I have to wear!” Others jumped in to smooth the debate over, explaining the rule was so that visitors of any nationality would be comfortable, but also suggesting there was some flexibility in the rules as well.

There are certainly many ways to interpret this exchange, noting the impulse towards evangelism and even latent classism within the immigrant community. To say that the rule is for non-Ghanaian visitors, however, is somewhat incongruent with the reality that non-Ghanaian visitors to the congregation are quite rare. Rather, I came to see this rule as being implicitly for the Ghanaians and other Africans that might come to the church, since these are the people most interested in finding a place that they can feel at home but where they will also be integrated into American life. If one has moved to a new country, and then attends a congregation where the pastor speaks in Twi and wears traditional Ghanaian clothes, the immediate indication is that the

congregation is looking to recreate Ghana in the U.S., and most of my informants stated that's not what they are looking for in a church. Rather, they responded positively to their pastor precisely because he was well-spoken, educated, had a good family, had a suburban condominium, and was professionally successful in the U.S. environment—everything they valued and were hoping to attain.

Clearly, the pastor's high social status comes along with a degree of cultural capital in the new environment that is one of the major resources he has to contribute to the trust network. Yet these contributions that characterize a trust network will not occur unless there are others who have less status and cultural capital. Contrasting the pastor with Benjamin and Gift, two young members who have been in Chicago only a few years, do not have families or higher degrees, and who currently drive taxis for a living, one can see how the large gap in status might actually solidify, rather than break down trust. Both parties need the other to establish ties of exchange and support, even if one side receives more actual resources than the other. From the framework of relational agency, the trust network is not an avenue of convenience through which to acquire material goods, but rather a good in and of itself that both parties work to achieve.

How exactly do such rituals build trust? When they are successful, social rituals create positive emotions toward the other that increase one's likelihood of engaging in a social ritual with the other in the future (Collins 2005). Social rituals in the congregational space are successful when they enhance positive emotions, which include both affection towards the other and one's overall sense of possibility and optimism about one's situation. As Benjamin stated above, since being in Beacon Ministries he is "now able to relate to life on a much more mature and optimistic note." From this point of view, we can understand both the rule against speaking Twi in Beacon Ministries and the perpetual impulse towards breaking it in informal

conversations before and after the services. The use of English, and the presentation of the core members and leaders as successful immigrations as noted above, creates a sense of optimism that the goals these migrants are hoping to achieve are indeed attainable. Engaging in informed discussion about the biblical text, and the pastors' repeated references to the original language of the bible, are all rituals that work *through emotions* to enhance trust. On the other hand, the ability to joke and banter in Twi with these same people creates positive feelings of mutual understanding, as do the very un-American rituals of picking everyone up for church and keeping things "free and relaxed."

If immigrants were choosing congregations on the basis of how well they were marketing particular religious "products", as marketplace theories assume, then we would expect several things. First of all, individuals need to differentiate between products at the outset—yet as I noted, there are more similarities than differences in the objective offerings of these congregations. Second, the larger the congregation, the better able it would be to effectively provide religious products on the whole, and so we would expect a market characterized by a small number of fairly large and distinct congregations (like we see in other markets such as cell phone service providers, high end magazines, and niche retail stores). Yet the story is much more complex. Individuals get drawn by friends and schoolmates into religious movements, they move to new locations, they ask people they know where to find a "good" church, they visit various congregations, sometimes they decide to start new congregations, they leave for personal reasons, their kids make friends who go to a different congregation and want to go there, and so on and so forth. Some people feel more comfortable in a small congregation; others want something slightly larger. If it were true that religious demand and the desire of religious suppliers to be successful were constants, and the only relevant variable was the strategies of

religious suppliers, then we would see a much more ordered religious market, again like the markets for particular consumer products. Instead, what we see is a dizzying array of available choices, a lot of switching back and forth by individuals, and yet very *similar* strategies by suppliers to attract those individuals. What varies ultimately is individual networks—every one's social location and history is slightly different. Thus, the theory of church choice as a relationship-driven process, and social rituals as the work that builds these relationships of trust, is the best way to explain the dynamics of congregational membership.

Bonding vs. bridging ties. Throughout the above section, I've suggested that the most important source of variation between congregations is the size and the nature of the trust network there, and in particular how ethnically and economically diverse it is. I've also suggested that generally speaking, West African migrants all want the same thing: a congregation where they can have close relationships but also interact with diverse groups. In the language of social capital theory, they are seeking both "bonding" and "bridging" ties (Wuthnow 2002). Yet if so, then why again do we see so much switching between congregations and so much variation in where people attend and participate? Wouldn't those congregations that are the right size and right degree of diversity, have good programs supporting the development of trust, and thus nicely balance the needs for bonding and bridging be the obvious choice for everyone? If such were the case, again the religious marketplace would likely look different. Congregations would be generally the same size, individuals wouldn't leave "good" congregations, and most importantly a "good" congregation for one person would be good for someone else. Individuals would agree on whether Beacon Ministries, for example, was a desirable congregation to be a part of.

Yet in reality, individuals experience and reflect on the same congregations differently. The committed members of Beacon Ministries talk fervently about how loving and supportive

the congregation is, while other informants of mine who had visited there in the past had a less positive impression. Likewise, Beacon Ministries' members talked about other congregations they had visited as "not friendly", while other informants in those particular congregations talked about how welcoming they were. Although they use the same terms to describe what is important to them—a "good" congregation is both welcoming and diverse—they have decidedly different impressions of which congregations are "good."

A good illustration of this is how different individuals describe West African congregations *in general,* relative to non-immigrant congregations. Several of my informants had decided that they did not want to attend any immigrant congregation, because 1) they are not diverse enough, and 2) there is a lot of "gossip", as a form of social control, in those congregations. Sylvia's story is a good example. She came to Chicago at a young age to live with her aunt, and so had very little choice initially in where she would go to church. Her aunt did not go to a Ghanaian congregation. Rather, "She had a push and pull relationship with the culture. She would gravitate towards it at times and then pull away from it at other times." When I asked her what she thought the push factors might have been, she replied, "The Ghanaian community is very…not competitive, but I think….well, competitive", and laughed. "People can be kind of showy. There is some jealousy and envy, and embarrassment when you don't have things that others have. It can put a strain on marriages, if you can't do certain things your friends can do, and you look at each other and wonder who's to blame." Another pastor and very prominent leader in the Ghanaian community cited this first as the reason why Ghanaians might want to avoid Ghanaian congregations: "Some of them feel there is a lot of gossip." When I asked him to explain this, he said, "it is just like people talking about you, and your family, and it also has something to do with envy."

Henry expressed the same sentiments, but even more strongly. He had come to Chicago in the past year to attend film school. He once visited Beacon Ministries, and had this reaction:

> I had avoided them, on frivolous grounds. First of all, anything that's too grounded in home I don't deal with…I don't think that we have come this far to recreate another Ghana. I feel that I achieve best when I don't try to hold onto my former life, and Ghanaians have this sense that they will make you feel like you are still at home…and they are a bit aggressive too, so that's why I decided, I'm not doing this.

It is interesting that he calls this "frivolous grounds", but then describes a dynamic of feeling almost trapped and restricted by the environment. Later he also used the term gossip: "I am always trying to avoid a gathering of Africans. I think we talk too much, we gossip too much and we are in everyone's business." When asked why he thought this was, he replied, "Because the West is somewhere we come to seek greener pastures, and there is like this foolish competition."

Gossip as a form of social control is thus linked to particular expectations of what migrants should be able to achieve through their move to a "land of opportunity." These expectations can be constraining, both when migrants' networks at home expect remittances and when migrant communities in the new world expect them to succeed. When the realities of racism in the marketplace of Chicago and the recent economic downturn make such success very difficult for some, or at least significantly delay it, this type of social control creates a pressure that is uncomfortable, and that causes the desire to opt out of relationships where such expectations are expressed.

These are cases, therefore, in which individuals perceive certain congregations as having too much "bonding" vs. "bridging" capital—they are viewed as insular, competitive, and controlling. Again, the *very same congregations* were viewed in a very different light by other informants. Several of Beacon Ministries' members specifically noted that the problems of

insularity and gossip exist in the Ghanaian community but are not prevalent at Beacon. Benjamin talked effusively about the love and acceptance at Beacon Ministries, but also told me on another occasion that he intentionally did not live in the neighborhood on Chicago's North Side with the largest population of Ghanaians, because "Ghanaians are gossips." He elaborated that those who have been here awhile can tend to look down on those who are new, either seeing them as a threat or telling them that they don't really know how things work over here. It is hard when you are all in a foreign country, and struggling to try and make it: "It is easier not to talk to people sometimes because they will worry you need something from them, or they might need something from you." Likewise Sandra, the woman mentioned above, talked openly about the problems in Ghanaian congregations: "Ghanaian churches are a lot of trouble…not all are very educated, so they involve themselves in a lot of unnecessary talk." She then said about Beacon Ministries: "When I entered, I was happy because there is peace, those there, they don't have time for gossip."

Ironically, then, the same networks and dynamics of reciprocity are seen as "constricting" in some cases and essential for survival in others. What makes the difference? Clearly, these perceptions are connected to but not directly reflective of the *actual* amount of social support, love, generosity, gossip, and nosiness in particular congregations' trust networks. On the other hand, they are also not entirely idiosyncratic or random, because certain congregations do generally seem to be more "preferred" than others, and there are several clear patterns in the data regarding congregation choice. One such pattern is the tendency for West Africans who have been in the U.S. for a while to have started going to a large, non-immigrant congregation when they first arrived but eventually been unhappy and settled on a "good" congregation of mostly-Africans. One man, who had tried numerous different American Charismatic congregations with

his wife and their two young children, said "I didn't want to do all Ghanaian…I wanted something with a good blend." Eventually, though, they settled on Beacon Ministries, because "you know, it's difficult to find a good church." Both he and his wife noted that in the American congregations they attended, there was good teaching and good music—two important criteria for any Charismatic. Yet the problem was, in those congregations people would go in, sit down, and then walk out after the service was over. The amount of socializing that occurred, and the closeness of the relationships there, was not enough to satisfy them. In these cases, there was plenty of "bridging" but not enough "bonding."

Among my informants, those who stayed and were satisfied in non-African congregations had other sources for strong relationships—usually through working at a university or living in a dorm—and seemed to have more than the usual amount of resources in other areas, too. Like Sylvia and Henry, mentioned above, they were in a good situation in good schools immediately upon arrival, due most likely to their families' resources and connections. David, who *did* attend Beacon, was a similar case in some ways. He was pursuing a second Master's degree at DePaul, and had initially started his time abroad at Hull University in England. He noted that most of his friends during the last few years have been roommates of various ethnicities and backgrounds. He told me that if not for his involvement at Beacon, "I would be in the dark on the Ghanaian community in Chicago." He only ended up at Beacon Ministries because his wife was attending a Beacon Ministries branch in Nashville, and called him one day to tell him that the Chicago branch was starting up and they needed his help. He said at first he wasn't really interested in going, but then the small congregation he had been involved in with his roommate fell apart, and he decided it be good to be involved in the same type of church as his wife, though for now they lived in different cities while she finished her medical school residency.

The more time I spent at Beacon, the more I began to see that this trend typified those in the congregation: many of the core members were not active or well-connected in the wider Ghanaian community. Most of them lived away from the city in suburban neighborhoods, rather than in traditionally black and immigrant areas. This is particularly true of the pastor and his wife, who both work in the medical field, had formerly lived in Iowa where almost no other African immigrants were present, and seemed little connected to the immigrant community in Chicago apart from their own congregation. This was illustrated during the "Ghanafest" event, which occurs every summer in Chicago, is organized by a Ghanaian cultural association, and is claimed to be the biggest Ghanaian cultural event in the Diaspora.[29] While one pastor I interviewed told me that Ghanafest is very important in his congregation, and that his congregation's choir would be performing in the midday ceremony, the Beacon Ministries' members put relatively little importance on this festival. In my first summer of fieldwork, a few of them went and passed out flyers for the church in the afternoon, but left before much of the dancing, singing, and eating took place. In my second summer of fieldwork, none of the older members went at all.

This apparent isolation of Beacon Ministries from the wider network of Ghanaians in Chicago was quite different from the other Ghanaian congregations my informants visited. For those who attended Beacon, this was viewed in a positive light: they had the social support they needed within the congregation and within their families, and with a few exceptions—mostly among the young adults—they did not seek it elsewhere. There were certainly "bridging" ties within the congregation, particularly between older, established members like the pastor and younger, more recent migrants like Benjamin and Gift. There was also a strong impulse coming from the organization's head back in Ghana to "grow" the church and bring in more non-

[29] http://www.ghananationalcouncil.org/ghanafest.htm, accessed March 13, 2012.

Ghanaians. Because of the larger organizations' desire to become more international, and not rely primary on the African immigrant community for their growth, this lack of interest in expanding networks to include more immigrants has an institutional basis as well. Yet perhaps most importantly, on a personal level those within the congregation seemed to be getting what they needed from their trust network. As Benjamin stated above, "it's not that I don't want the church to grow"; but he *really* likes the intimacy in the congregation and the fact that it is smaller. This aligns with other research (Olson 1989) suggesting that congregations with the strongest "bonding" ties also have the most difficulty in incorporating new participants.

Extending the argument to the wider population of Ghanaians in Chicago, the question thus becomes one of how motivated people are—and how urgently they feel the need—to expand their trust networks within the church context and develop "bridging" relationships to the wider community. What varies between individuals is how *pressing* it is that they build or expand their networks; and this is shaped by how much capital and success they have attained in other areas. In other words, it varies by social status.

Those who have low status or are new to the community and thus need to develop their networks will act more strategically in choosing their congregation. Theoretically, they will switch more often, and be more sensitive to incidents of gossip and insularity on the one hand and failure to provide needed help on the other hand. It is more important to them that the congregation is just right, and that the people there will help and not hinder them, "make" and not "break" them. Anyone who has moved to a new city has experienced the same dynamic. The establishment of basic bridging ties to community networks matters most at first, and one will consciously seek out the best scenarios in which to do so. In the case of immigrants, the most obvious place to do this is in non-immigrant, non-denominational congregations like

Willowcreek or Life Changers.[30] Over time, as one's status becomes more established, and concurrently one's ties to those Ghana become relatively weaker and less central, developing good long-term bonding relationships becomes more of a conscious focus. The pace of this will be slightly different for everyone, depending on a variety of material and social factors. Both bridging and bonding ties are essential, and good bridging requires a certain degree of bonding. Yet people prioritize them differently at different stages of life and different levels of social status.

One caveat should be made here to the argument that small congregations with economically successful members and a close-knit trust network will not grow quickly. It is the nature of the racial boundary in the host community of urban Chicago, and long-standing religious segregation (Smith and Emerson 2001). As noted, Beacon Ministries is not *entirely* unmotivated to expand their network. They have strong institutional and personal reasons to de-prioritize contacts to the immigrant community, but also to seek out bridging ties to the wider American community. Nevertheless, it is difficult to bring white Americans into a black immigrant congregation. We are used to being a racial majority and uncomfortable in social settings when we are not, particularly because race has been constructed as such an important indicator of difference in our society. This dynamic showed up in my interviews as a frustrating boundary imposed from the wider culture on the desires of immigrants to develop diverse congregations. In America, building bridging relationships across racial boundaries that *also* have a minimal level of closeness is quite difficult.

Thus, the "multicultural" but mono-racial congregation becomes the dominant type, despite the fact that in their socioeconomic characteristics and cultural sensibilities, recent

[30] Both of these are congregations with tens of thousands of members in the Chicago area, and both are evangelical, non-denominational, and of U.S. origin. Both of them had been visited or attended by informants of mine in Chicago as well. See www.willowcreek.org and www.lifechangerschurch.org.

immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa look much more like the white mainstream than the urban African-American underclass. In their own culture, race does NOT define social status; and thus to experience the imposition of this "master status" upon arrival was deeply unsettling. One woman, a doctor, said:

> Here, everything is about race…it's like the first thing you ask, 'Are they white or black?' In Ghana, I never really thought about being black at all, and people won't really discriminate on the basis of your skin color…You might go into a town and the kids have never seen a white person, so they get excited and yell at you, and they might assume you are rich and try to overcharge you for something, but they won't really treat you badly because of your skin color.

We could assume that this sentiment is the natural result of moving from majority status to minority status in her lifetime. Yet having been a white person in Ghana, and having been a white person in a Ghanaian congregation in Chicago, I was inclined to agree with her. In this way, my heavy participation in Beacon Ministries allowed me to experience—personally and even emotionally—the nature of racial dynamics in Ghanaian culture. Although most of these African-initiated "multicultural" congregations did not appear to have made significant inroads into white America, I was on the receiving end of a strong inclusive sentiment, one that valued and sought after ties bridging racial and national boundaries. Yet despite that inclusivity, in the end Africans tend to feel unwelcome—in ways they understand welcoming—in white or mixed American congregations, and Americans do not usually attend African ones.

Ultimately, in the case of the "multicultural" but mono-racial congregation, the result is ties that bridge *some* socioeconomic and national boundaries, but not others. Further, while the need for bonding seems universal in this community, the motivation to develop bridging ties varies. In Beacon Ministries, many who attend are already successful and integrated into the American professional society, and therefore they do not need the connections that a larger, more diverse congregation could provide. Certain pressure situations create the need for bridging

ties—migration, forced proximity with diverse groups, abject poverty, etc. Stress and change thus become the catalysts for looking outward and widening one's network of trust.

Conclusion

Several important implications for research on both immigration, religion, and the nature of voluntary networks follow from these findings. The first is that quite simply, migrants specifically and church-goers more generally make choices that impact their long-term outcomes. The immigration literature has typically treated such outcomes as the result of political and structural dynamics, while the religion literature has focused on the strategies that religious organizations take to attract members (the "supply side"). Yet individual agency matters as well, though we don't have to think about it in terms of rational choice models or attribute god-like qualities of self-determination to the individual.

The second is to break down the dichotomy between bonding and bridging ties. While parallel needs for expanding, boundary-crossing networks and close-knit, intimate relations do at times create a tension, bonding and bridging ties are not mutually-exclusive. In fact, bridging *requires* a certain degree of bonding. Immigrants usually seek out congregations that offer a mix of both, and in the context of the congregation ties that bridge one group with another can also be characterized by deep closeness and trust. However, there is a degree of balance that must be achieved, since those congregations with the most potential for bridging ties (i.e. large, non-immigrant congregations) also are the most difficult places, according to my interviewees, to find the bonding ties they also need. Finding both does not necessarily occur automatically. It often takes significant effort on the part of individuals and congregation leaders.

This idea of "effort" brings me to the 3rd major implication, that building trust occurs through social rituals of an array of types. It is curious that studies of social networks have spent so much time analyzing the *effects* of existing social network structures but so little time in ethnographic observation of how the bonds that make up these networks are formed. There is

ample evidence that individuals' networks undergo an incredible degree of flux over the life course. Immigrants are not unusual in this, they are just subject to a more sudden and dramatic moment of network transition.

Finally, the 4th major implication regards social solidarity in the face of diversity, inequality, and racial divisions. This overall study, viewed within the relational agency paradigm, suggests that external shocks, stress, transition, and disadvantage can be factors that motivate *inclusivity*, rather than "hunkering down" or retreating into homogenous enclaves. Although *generalized trust* may decline in increasingly diverse societies (Kesler and Bloemraad 2010; Putnam 2007), there seems to be a parallel impulse towards those social settings—like religious congregations—where personalized trust can be built and extended beyond the homogenous network. Ultimately, this study paints a picture of how individuals react to structural realities—like race, social status, ethnicity, and migration—and respond by making particular choices, all in order to attain the kind of intimacy with others and communal belonging that gives their lives real meaning. In this way, those who have been the victims of colonial imperialism, post-colonial exploitation, and racial segregation nonetheless continue to find ways to thrive and engage in their "most important projects" through available avenues. Group participation on the basis of religion is one important way—although certainly not the only way—in which they do so.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

On Religion

The three chapters of this dissertation have used disparate methods and datasets to support a single argument: that in the modern world, religion can primarily be understood as *collective participation in the development of trust networks.* It is not simply that religion matters greatly for Africans at home and abroad, but that it matters in a particular way, as a social space in which basic human motivations towards trust and intimacy can be relationally enacted. Although the idea that networks are formed through religious participation is not new, to make the formation of networks an explanatory factor in how, why, and where individuals engage in religion is more innovative.

There is a nuanced distinction between this argument and the classic Durkheimian one, which entirely reduces religion to an expression of the social unity (Durkheim 1995[1956]). In that classic argument, the society—and by extension, religion—functions mainly to restrain individuals' self-interested material drives. As individuals in the nascent days of human civilization come in contact and in conflict with each other, human beings "discover" social cooperation as a way to avoid violence and better achieve their material ends. Religious beliefs and rituals arise over time to reaffirm that cooperation and ensure its longevity. The argument is both evolutionary and materialistic at a fundamental level, whereas my understanding of religion as participation is neither. First, I see human motivation differently. Persons need relationship in order to be persons at all, and thus social participation is in fact as fundamental a drive as hunger and avoidance of bodily pain (Smith 2010:25-89). This perspective, called "strong relationality" by some (Slife and Wiggins 2009; Slife 2004), makes the development of personhood through interdependent participation the most fundamental object of social scientific analysis. Secondly,

there is no evolutionary bent to this perspective, since it sees this motivation as constant and human persons as social and as religious as they have always been.

What *does* change throughout history, however, is the nature of social spaces in which such interdependent participation takes place, and thus the basis for the development of trust networks. "Secularization" in the West is associated with non-religiousness, which from this perspective can be understood as a movement away from traditional religious spaces as venues for social participation. The workplace and the classroom are two dominant alternatives. Each of these various venues has certain key characteristics, and if anything has changed on a larger scale throughout the 20th century it is the increasing primacy of social venues that are not tied to locality or biology. Arguably, this is most visible in the African case, and thus it is natural that religious participation is now such an important social venue among this population. Participation in religious congregations is thus a very "modern" basis of social participation and trust, not just because many religious traditions now espouse "modern" values but also because it reflects the transnational and transitional character of life today.

The three main chapters of this dissertation support this theory in the following ways. First, chapter one shows a correlation between participation in Protestant religious communities and membership in the ruling political party through the 2000's in Ghana. Membership in the ruling party in turn is positively correlated with political interest and accessing public goods such as id cards and public school placements. Thus, in the current multi-party system, party membership shapes overall political incorporation, and those who participate in the mainline religious traditions are more likely to be politically incorporated through this avenue. The fact that this is true *without* overwhelming direct effects of religion on political incorporation suggests that religious bodies are not affecting political incorporation by top-down espousal of

particular political agendas, but rather indirectly through the dynamics of overlapping religious and political networks. In the case of Ghana, there is no fundamental affinity between Protestantism and the NPP, but rather an indirect process through which participation in one mainline social venue supports participation with other mainline venues.

The second chapter makes this affinity between religious and political participation even clearer, showing that it is the overwhelming pattern across 13 African countries. Yet again, we see no fundamental direct affinities between one or another religious tradition and political interest, suggesting that it is the grassroots, contextual dynamics of religious participation that matter much more than top-down doctrinal or ideological processes. In this chapter, it starts to become clear why these processes can at times create social divides when they map onto political and educational differences. This is particularly true with highly-educated Muslims who are a political minority. Such processes of identification *vis a vis* the "other" are embedded in actual relations of trust, which are built through participation in various social settings. The negative side of religious participation develops when one's trust networks are isolated or excluded from social resources, and at the same time perceptions of who is "trustworthy" and who is not come to rely on religious and ethnic identity markers.

Finally, chapter three examines religious participation from an ethnographic, phenomenological perspective. Notwithstanding the importance of spirituality as a worldview among Africans, the search for trust and fruitful participation is a decisive factor in where and how much Africans get involved in religious groups both at home and abroad. Clusters of trust networks develop within congregations, balancing both the bonding impulse towards closeness and security and the bridging impulse towards widening the network to include the contributions of diverse others. In fact, the evidence suggests that trust networks *require* inequality for the

many exchanges they are built upon to take place. Yet if inequalities in the network potentially handicap the bonding function—as in the case of racial inequality—then it becomes very difficult for congregational trust networks to bridge them. In this chapter, *relational agency* refers to the interactive group behaviors through which individuals participating in the network choose each other. Even those rituals usually thought of in terms of their function in relation to the supernatural can also be seen through this lens, since they bring people together through the practice both physically and emotionally.

My hope is that this understanding of religion will move the debate forward and neutralize sweeping normative judgments of whether religion is "good" or "bad" for modern society. Religious participation is enormously useful for millions of people around the world, particularly as periodic migration becomes the norm for so many. In its very nature as a basis of trust, it brings some people together and isolates others. From a trust networks perspective, social cohesion and division are dialectic processes, and religion is just one social venue in which these processes play out. To fault it as a divisive tendency or laud it as a social panacea is to misunderstand how it works in today's society.

On Africa and Africans

The image of Africans as "passive victims" of colonialism, racism, imperialism, embattled primordial identities, and missionization is fast disintegrating. On the other hand, it still persists implicitly both in public discourse and in academic research, particularly where religion is concerned. The recognition that Africans are no longer "pagan", but in fact overwhelmingly associated with Christianity and Islam, is itself only recently established. The insight that Africans interpret, utilize, and transform these traditions in terms of their own unique spiritual and political experience is gaining traction, but still seems to have barely touched mainstream social science. Demographers, political scientists, and sociologists continue to rely on data that treats religion as a fixed set of relative identities (i.e. Protestant vs. Catholic, Christian vs. Muslim). Further, they continue to theorize about these identities as top-down, bureaucratic institutions that are forces for tradition at best and domination at worst. What they fail to recognize is that religious ideas have been mixing in Africa for centuries, that Africans overwhelmingly converted to Christianity and Islam on their own terms, and that the presence of a religious bureaucracy does not mean that laypeople themselves follow the dictates of that bureaucracy.

The paradox of traditional and charismatic authority at work in in religion in the modern world is that it can be both a force for the *status quo* and an avenue for grassroots innovation. In the case of Africans both on the continent and abroad, the latter dynamic is clearly at work. My informants were highly educated, cosmopolitan, and wholeheartedly committed to the idea that religiosity is a matter of personal choice. This was true not only among well-off Ghanaians in Accra and Chicago but also among those in rural Malawi, where I conducted earlier research (Manglos 2011, 2010). The push to attribute greater agency to Africans in their own history is

not new (see Bayart 2000; Thornton 1998; Davidson 1995), nor is the idea that the global movement of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity carries distinctly "modern" sensibilities (Miller and Yamamuri 2007; Martin 2002). What is different about my argument is that I see religion *in general* in Africa as an avenue for the expression of modern ideals, specifically self-determination and choice. By introducing the model of congregational membership and participation, Christianity and Islam have ushered in a malleable basis of trust networks that *works* for Africans' modern life, characterized as it is by migration, rapid social change, and the impetus towards communal and individual development. Of course, it carries tensions. In the long run, it is doubtful that such malleable identities that can be dissolved easily when individuals and families move can provide the same level of security as extended family and local village networks in a context of minimal migration. Most of my respondents considered themselves to be in a transitional period, both as individuals and as a community, in which short-term relational sacrifices were justified in order to achieve a better life. Most of them dream of returning to a better version of Ghana, where they could enjoy freedom, education, and material security right alongside strong communal interdependence. The U.S. and Europe are filled with opportunity but isolating; Ghana is filled with family and friends but stifling for those with ambition. In the interim stages of achieving one's economic and personal goals, more choices bring more dilemmas. Yet as long as we see Africans, immigrants, and religious participants as primarily passive victims of powerful structures, we will poorly understand the dilemmas they face and the ways in which they respond to them.

Moving Forward

The mixed-method strategy and theoretical paradigm used in this study open the door to a broad spectrum of related projects. The theory of religion as a collective participation in the development of trust networks naturally supports mixed-method attention to both micro-sociological interactive processes and macro-level patterns of how religious participation overlaps with other types of association. The insight from chapter one that religious participation may support ruling party membership has been barely touched in prior literature, and carries significant implications for international development and state-building. One could argue that the multi-party system relies on party membership as a primarily- ideological identity that does not determine one's access to resources and public goods. If party membership, on the other hand, corresponds mainly to different patronage networks that distribute resources, then for the individual party membership will develop an opportunistic rather than ideological basis. In such cases, it is also quite probable that patronage networks will overlap with networks of religious participation as well.

For those who study religion, this dissertation is a clear call to focus on collective practices in congregational settings, rather than survey-level differences between individuals affiliated with different hierarchical traditions, or those who have no affiliation vs. those who do. Although the nature of local congregations is not completely independent of top-down structures—there are, for example, likely to be similarities between Presbyterian congregations—nevertheless those structures are far from determinant of local, micro-sociological dynamics. There are Presbyterian congregations that in terms of social and even liturgical practices look completely different. Although this is partly a call for more ethnographies of religious practice, it doesn't stop there. The field also needs more survey data

on what sorts of collective practices congregations engage in, and whether there are patterns by geography, race, class, or nationality. To this point, standard questions on religion have been mostly limited to what individuals do and believe (i.e. whether they attend church, pray, or belief in God) and what type of religious congregation they attend, in standard denominational terms. Rarely do surveys ask about what congregations do together, or which congregational practices individuals regularly engage in. Examples might be giving rides to church, like the Ghanaian congregation in Chicago, or meeting midweekly, or providing educational resources, or developing avenues for material assistance.

Lastly, the evidence here shows that various social settings such as congregations, universities, workplaces, neighborhoods, and extended families, cannot be considered in isolation from one another. The way that individuals approach their networks in the congregation is directly related to the nature of their relationships elsewhere. Such are not discrete spheres of life but rather overlapping circles, and any analysis of the meaning of religion among certain populations must take into account the structure of social relations in other circles of life as well. The fact that transnational Africans experience a particular type of mobility, prioritize higher education, and have arguably experienced a decline in the importance of local and biological bases of trust directly affects the way they approach their religious participation. An unfortunate limitation to this study is that I am not able to show the degree to which church-based trust networks endure over time, or when migrants go through progressive moves. I have also, because of the cross-sectional nature of the study, not been able to show whether participation in religious congregations leads to different long-term outcomes for individuals and families. Such an analysis would fill an important gap in understanding the real, long-term impact of congregation-based trust networks. This and other research makes clear the phenomenological

importance of religious participation for transnational Africans; it remains to be proven whether the diverse patterns of participation I have observed do in fact lead to divergent outcomes and changes in immigrants social-structural position. In the meantime, this dissertation marks an important step forward in the interstices between studies of religion, immigration, politics, and development. It strengthens our understanding of agency and human motivation, and uncovers the sources of seemingly-paradoxical forces towards cohesion and fractionalization within the religious sphere. It also gives agency and voice to a neglected population in social science. Hopefully, it will eventually be one of many network- and congregation-based studies of religious participation to come.

APPENDIX A: TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 2.1: Predicting political interest by ethno-linguistic group

	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4) (Wave 2 only)*	*(5) (Wave 3 only)*
Ethno-linguistic group					
Ewe[31]	0.016	0.014	0.065	0.194**	-0.048
	(0.057)	*(0.057)*	*(0.057)*	*(0.090)*	*(0.073)*
Ga	-0.055	-0.024	-0.030	0.052	-0.111
	(0.061)	*(0.076)*	*(0.061)*	*(0.084)*	*(0.088)*
Mole-Dagbani	0.030	0.050	0.052	0.228**	-0.200*
	(0.080)	*(0.085)*	*(0.080)*	*(0.106)*	*(0.121)*
Other	0.065	0.075*	0.081*	0.251***	-0.023
	(0.042)	*(0.045)*	*(0.042)*	*(0.075)*	*(0.050)*
Rural	-0.001	-0.000	-0.004	-0.035	0.034
	(0.031)	*(0.031)*	*(0.031)*	*(0.046)*	*(0.042)*
Female	-0.244***	-0.244***	-0.240***	-0.260***	-0.227***
	(0.032)	*(0.032)*	*(0.031)*	*(0.046)*	*(0.042)*
R is household head	0.026	0.027	0.022	0.012	0.015
	(0.034)	*(0.034)*	*(0.034)*	*(0.050)*	*(0.046)*
Completed secondary ed.	0.209***	0.210***	0.201***	0.265***	0.146***
	(0.033)	*(0.033)*	*(0.033)*	*(0.049)*	*(0.044)*
Age	-0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.003*	-0.003
	(0.001)	*(0.001)*	*(0.001)*	*(0.002)*	*(0.002)*
Instability index	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.001	0.004
	(0.005)	*(0.005)*	*(0.005)*	*(0.007)*	*(0.006)*
Wave	-0.059**	-0.059**	-0.057*		
	(0.030)	*(0.030)*	*(0.030)*		
Ethnicity is the same as majority in region		0.035			
		(0.051)			
Member of ruling party			0.160***	0.120***	0.206***
			(0.030)	*(0.0441)*	*(0.040)*
Constant	0.142*	0.105	0.061	-0.078	-0.077
	(0.086)	*(0.102)*	*(0.0870)*	*(0.0675)*	*(0.0641)*
Observations	2,323	2,323	2,323	1,137	1,186

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

[31] Reference category is Akan.

Table 2.2: Predicting accessing public goods by ethno-linguistic group

	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)* *(Wave 2 only)*	*(5)* *(Wave 3 only)*
Ethno-linguistic group					
Ewe	-0.031	-0.032	0.007	0.070	-0.038
	(0.073)	*(0.073)*	*(0.074)*	*(0.111)*	*(0.098)*
Ga	0.184**	0.209**	0.202**	-0.013	0.493***
	(0.079)	*(0.098)*	*(0.079)*	*(0.104)*	*(0.119)*
Mole-Dagbani	0.269***	0.286***	0.286***	0.008	0.708***
	(0.103)	*(0.110)*	*(0.103)*	*(0.131)*	*(0.163)*
Other	0.073	0.081	0.085	0.233**	0.029
	(0.055)	*(0.058)*	*(0.055)*	*(0.092)*	*(0.068)*
Rural	-0.042	-0.041	-0.044	-0.107*	0.030
	(0.040)	*(0.041)*	*(0.040)*	*(0.056)*	*(0.057)*
Female	-0.161***	-0.161***	-0.158***	-0.143**	-0.162***
	(0.041)	*(0.041)*	*(0.041)*	*(0.057)*	*(0.057)*
R is household head	0.173***	0.174***	0.170***	0.160**	0.190***
	(0.044)	*(0.044)*	*(0.044)*	*(0.062)*	*(0.063)*
Completed secondary ed.	0.263***	0.263***	0.257***	0.357***	0.179***
	(0.043)	*(0.043)*	*(0.043)*	*(0.060)*	*(0.060)*
Age	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	-0.002
	(0.001)	*(0.001)*	*(0.001)*	*(0.002)*	*(0.002)*
gpc1_instable	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.001	0.008
	(0.006)	*(0.006)*	*(0.006)*	*(0.009)*	*(0.009)*
Wave 3	0.109***	0.109***	0.111***		
	(0.038)	*(0.039)*	*(0.038)*		
Ethnicity is the same as majority in region		0.029			
		(0.066)			
Member of ruling party			0.120***	0.139**	0.121**
			(0.039)	*(0.054)*	*(0.055)*
Constant	-0.415***	-0.445***	-0.476***	-0.283***	-0.160*
	(0.111)	*(0.131)*	*(0.112)*	*(0.083)*	*(0.087)*
Observations	2,323	2,323	2,323	1,137	1,186

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2.3: Predicting political interest and accessing public goods by religious affiliation

	(1) *Political interest*	*(2)* *Political interest*	*(3)* *Accessed goods*	*(4)* *Accessed goods*
Religion				
Mission Protestant[1]	-0.064	-0.068	-0.069	-0.071
	(0.042)	*(0.041)*	*(0.054)*	*(0.054)*
Catholic	-0.054	-0.042	-0.082	-0.073
	(0.050)	*(0.050)*	*(0.065)*	*(0.065)*
Muslim	0.008	0.024	-0.028	-0.017
	(0.053)	*(0.053)*	*(0.069)*	*(0.069)*
Traditionalist	-0.064	-0.035	-0.059	-0.039
	(0.080)	*(0.079)*	*(0.103)*	*(0.103)*
Other	-0.151**	-0.139**	-0.161*	-0.153*
	(0.068)	*(0.067)*	*(0.088)*	*(0.087)*
Rural	0.017	0.017	-0.041	-0.042
	(0.031)	*(0.031)*	*(0.040)*	*(0.040)*
Female	-0.247***	-0.240***	-0.169***	-0.164***
	(0.032)	*(0.032)*	*(0.041)*	*(0.041)*
R is household head	0.029	0.024	0.167***	0.163***
	(0.034)	*(0.034)*	*(0.044)*	*(0.044)*
Completed secondary ed.	0.201***	0.197***	0.241***	0.238***
	(0.034)	*(0.034)*	*(0.044)*	*(0.043)*
Age	-0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	*(0.001)*	*(0.002)*	*(0.002)*
Instability index	0.002	0.002	0.005	0.006
	(0.005)	*(0.005)*	*(0.006)*	*(0.006)*
Wave	-0.054*	-0.049*	0.108***	0.112***
	(0.030)	*(0.030)*	*(0.038)*	*(0.038)*
Member of ruling party		0.156***		0.109***
		(0.030)		*(0.039)*
Constant	0.180**	0.094	-0.307***	-0.366***
	(0.091)	*(0.091)*	*(0.117)*	*(0.119)*
Observations	2,323	2,323	2,323	2,323

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

[1] Reference category is Charismatic/Pentecostal Protestant.

Table 2.4: Full models predicting political incorporation[1]

	(1) Political Interest	*(3) Accessed Goods*
Ethno-linguistic group		
Ewe[2]	0.082	0.010
	(0.058)	*(0.075)*
Ga	-0.028	0.248***
	(0.063)	*(0.082)*
Mole-Dagbani	0.022	0.202*
	(0.091)	*(0.117)*
Other	0.057	-0.026
	(0.063)	*(0.081)*
Religion		
Mission Protestant[3]	-0.070*	-0.065
	(0.042)	*(0.054)*
Catholic	-0.056	-0.100
	(0.051)	*(0.066)*
Muslim	-0.001	-0.098
	(0.057)	*(0.074)*
Traditionalist	-0.070	-0.105
	(0.082)	*(0.106)*
None/other	-0.152**	-0.172**
	(0.068)	*(0.088)*
Mean distance to nat'l capital	0.000	0.0004**
	(0.000)	*(0.000)*
Member of ruling party	0.161***	0.116***
	(0.030)	*(0.039)*
Rural	0.005	-0.050
	(0.032)	*(0.041)*
Female	-0.241***	-0.164***
	(0.032)	(0.041)
R is household head	0.025	0.174***
	(0.034)	(0.044)
Completed primary ed.	0.199***	0.251***
	(0.034)	(0.044)
Wave	-0.057*	0.122***
	(0.030)	(0.039)
Constant	0.112	-0.403***
	(0.092)	(0.119)
Observations	2,323	2,323

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

[1] Models also control for age and livelihood instability, not shown.
[2] Reference category is Akan.
[3] Reference category is Charismatic/Pentecostal Protestant.

Table 2.5: Predicting membership in ruling political party (odds ratios from logistic regression models)

	(1)
Ethno-linguistic group	
Ewe[1]	0.240***
	(0.202)
Ga	0.566***
	(0.189)
Mole-Dagbani	0.624*
	(0.271)
Other	0.687**
	(0.183)
Religion	
Mission Protestant[2]	1.153
	(0.120)
Catholic	0.760*
	(0.148)
Muslim	0.680**
	(0.167)
Traditionalist	0.583**
	(0.257)
None/other	0.834
	(0.200)
Mean distance to nat'l capital	1.000
	(0.000)
Rural	1.054
	(0.093)
Female	0.853*
	(0.093)
R is household head	1.122
	(0.101)
Completed primary ed.	1.167
	(0.100)
Age	0.995*
	(0.003)
Instability index	0.989
	(0.014)
Wave	0.922
	(0.089)
Constant	1.195
	(0.266)
Observations	2,323

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

[1] Reference category is Akan.
[2] Reference category is Charismatic/Pentecostal Protestant.

Table 3.1: Traditional approaches linking the religious and political spheres

	Approach	*Implies denominational differences*	*Greater political involvement among:*
1	Religious leaders engage in political activity	Yes	Mainline[1]
2	Religion provides politically subversive symbols	Yes	Varies by setting
3	Religion is enriches the public sphere through:		
	- formal education	Yes	Mainline[1]
	- Enhancing civic consciousness	No	??
4	Religion identity maps onto political inequalities, deepening divisions	Yes	??

[1] Mainline refers to Catholic and Old Mission Protestant denominations.

Table 3.2: Descriptive summary of key variables by country

	Sample size	*Interest in politics (1-5)*		*completed primary school*		*religiously active*	
		Mean	*S.D.*	*%*	*S.D.*	*%*	*S.D.*
Country	*(1)*	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)*
Benin	1200	2.88	1.48	37.83	0.49	26.94	0.44
Botswana	1200	2.83	1.55	67.25	0.47	43.25	0.50
Ghana	1200	2.88	1.66	61.25	0.49	70.83	0.45
Kenya	1104	3.05	1.49	73.82	0.44	66.82	0.47
Lesotho	1200	2.95	1.73	51.50	0.50	32.08	0.47
Liberia	1200	2.08	1.69	58.58	0.49	72.75	0.46
Malawi	1200	2.73	1.75	38.17	0.49	59.10	0.49
Mozambique	1200	2.79	1.80	60.67	0.49	53.38	0.50
Namibia	1200	2.49	1.63	82.33	0.38	30.75	0.46
Nigeria	2324	2.65	1.56	82.27	0.38	58.82	0.49
South Africa	2400	2.45	1.51	86.42	0.34	41.50	0.49
Tanzania	1208	3.33	1.41	79.97	0.40	71.11	0.45
Uganda	2431	2.59	1.56	65.94	0.47	51.30	0.50

Table 3.3: Mean level of interest in politics by religious group and country

	BEN (1)	*BWA (2)*	*GHA (3)*	*KEN (4)*	*LSO (5)*	*LIB (6)*	*MWI (7)*	*MOZ (8)*	*NAM (9)*	*NGA (10)*	*SAF (11)*	*TAN (12)*	*UGA (13)*
M. Prot.	3.87	3.21	4.12	4.23	3.45	2.29	3.31	3.58	2.74	3.93	2.70	3.73	3.27
Pentecostal	4.46	2.94	3.78	3.93	3.77	2.00	3.40	3.50	2.74	3.66	2.38	4.28	3.12
Just Christian	3.70	2.78	3.71	4.13		1.64		3.67	2.05	3.74	2.37	4.18	3.12
Evang./ Indep.	3.87	2.94		3.66	3.37	2.66	2.62	3.38/ 3.04[1]	2.79				
Catholic	3.98	2.90	4.01	4.20	3.55	2.16	3.08	3.64	2.52	3.64	2.56	3.88	3.11
Muslim	3.79		3.76	4.12		2.20	2.97	3.66		3.71		4.20	3.17
Traditionalist	3.84		3.33										
N. M. Prot.		2.64		4.16					2.28			3.69	
AICs		2.80					2.85				2.22[2]		
None/ Other	3.41	2.90	3.49	4.16	3.09	2.20	3.10	3.30	2.58	3.68	2.67/ 2.42[3]	3.67	3.33

[1] Evangelical and Independent groups are separated in Mozambique only.
[2] The "AIC" group in South Africa is primarily members of Zionist churches.
[3] "None" and "Other" groups are separated in South Africa only.

Table 3.4: OLS regression models predicting slope of religion interactions

	*β religion*primary education* *(1)*	*β religion*primary education* *(2)*	*β religion*primary education* *(3)*	*β religion*primary education* *(4)*	*β religion*active member* *(5)*
% of total population	-0.011**			-0.011***	
	(0.004)			(0.003)	
Year of multiparty transition		0.009**		0.009*	
		(0.003)		(0.004)	
Total ODA			0.00007***	0.000006***	
			-0.000	-0.000	
Proportion of pop. religiously active					-0.006**
					(0.003)
Constant	0.525***	-17.070**	0.259***	-17.120*	0.605***
	(0.098)	(6.643)	(0.084)	(8.265)	(0.146)
N	68	68	68	68	68
R-squared	0.064	0.033	0.095	0.189	0.075

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics of Ghanaian immigrants to the U.S. as compared with other African immigrants and all foreign-born

	Ghanaian, foreign-born	**African, foreign-born**	**All foreign-born**
Mean age	37.86 (.6587)	36.10 (.1879)	43.53 (.0321)
Percent male	56.49 %	52.18 %	47.78 %
Family arrangement			
Single, never married	34.43 %	37.13 (%)	25.94 %
Divorced, widowed, separated	14.85 %	12.86 (%)	14.70 %
Married, spouse present	41.65 %	43.49 (%)	54.60 %
Married, spouse absent	9.07 %	6.53 (%)	4.76 %
Immigration history			
Mean years in U.S.	13.65 (.4258)	13.35 (.1103)	22.42 (.0266)
U.S. citizen	42.47 %	40.03 %	45.80 %
Moved at all in the past year	21.44 %	21.51 (%)	15.02 %
Socioeconomic variables			
Mean household income	72,534 (2396)	37,041 (20243)	80,031 (145.80)
In the labor force	78.56 %	70.77 %	62.56 %
Currently in school	26.39 %	32.37 %	14.61 %
Has less than high school education	13.39 %	21.17 %	35.13 %
Has high school, but not bachelor's	60.00 %	45.75 %	38.96 %
Has bachelor's degree or higher	26.61 %	33.08 %	25.91 %
Seigel's occupational prestige	32.99 (.9472)	31.37 (.2684)	27.17 (.0381)
Nakao and Treas occ. prestige	36.21 (9823)	34.47 (.2829)	29.78 (23.21)
N	485	6,972	336,664

Standard deviations for continuous variables shown in parentheses
Source: New Immigrant Survey, 2004

Figure 4.1: Ethno-Regional Map of Ghana

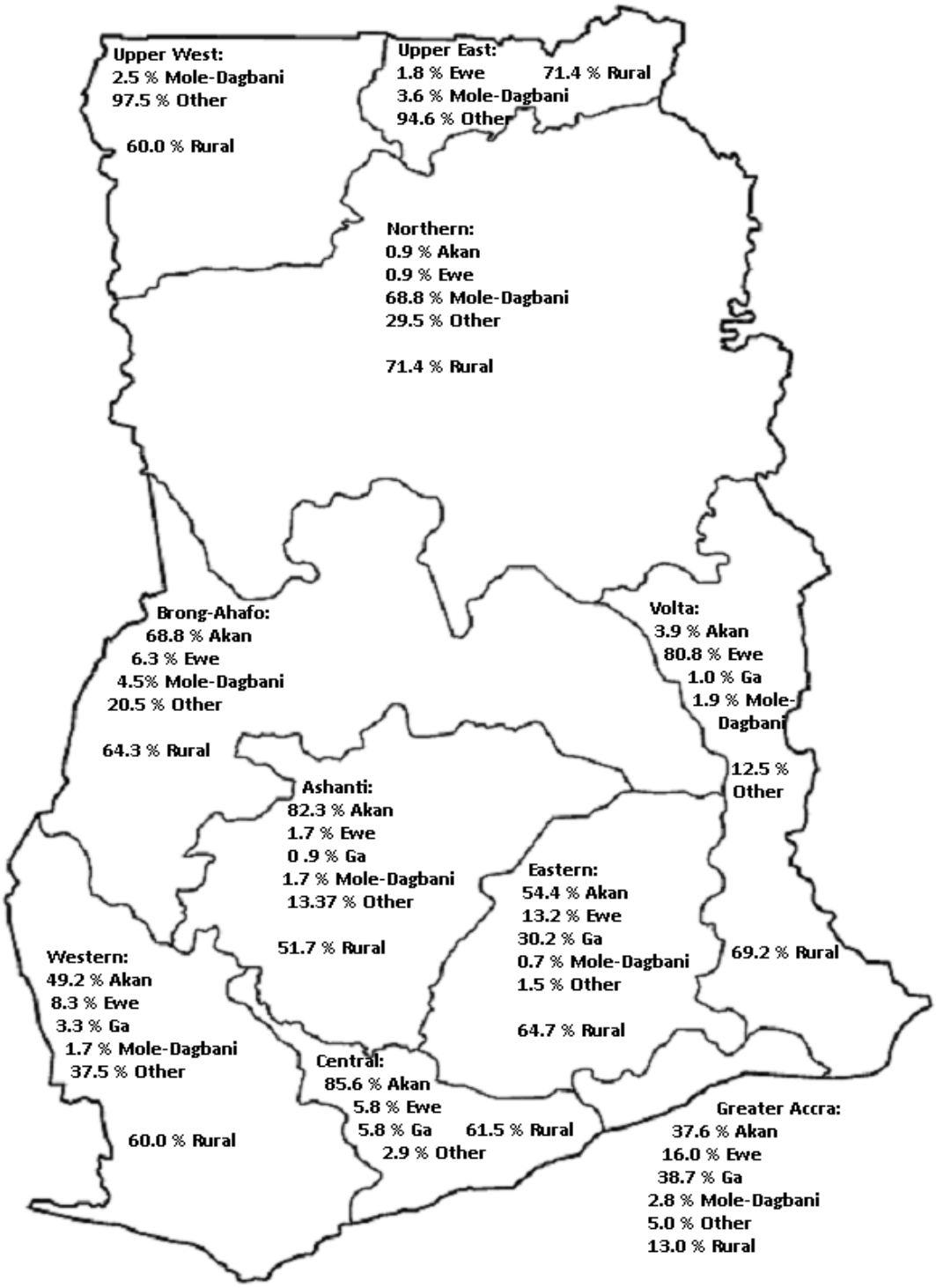
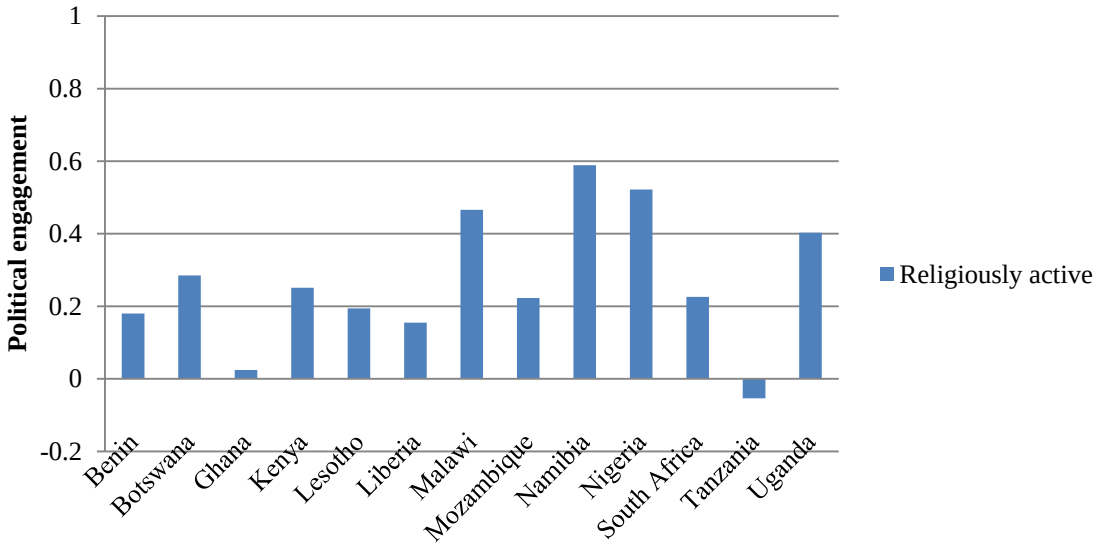


Figure 4.1: Effects of active religious membership on political engagement by country



All coefficients show within-cluster differences between religiously active and non-active individuals, using within-country probability weights provided by Afrobarometer. All models control for having completed secondary education, sex, rural vs. urban sampling area, and religious affiliation.

Figure 3.2: Degree of religious activity predicting interest in politics, by religious affiliation (Afrobarometer 2008)

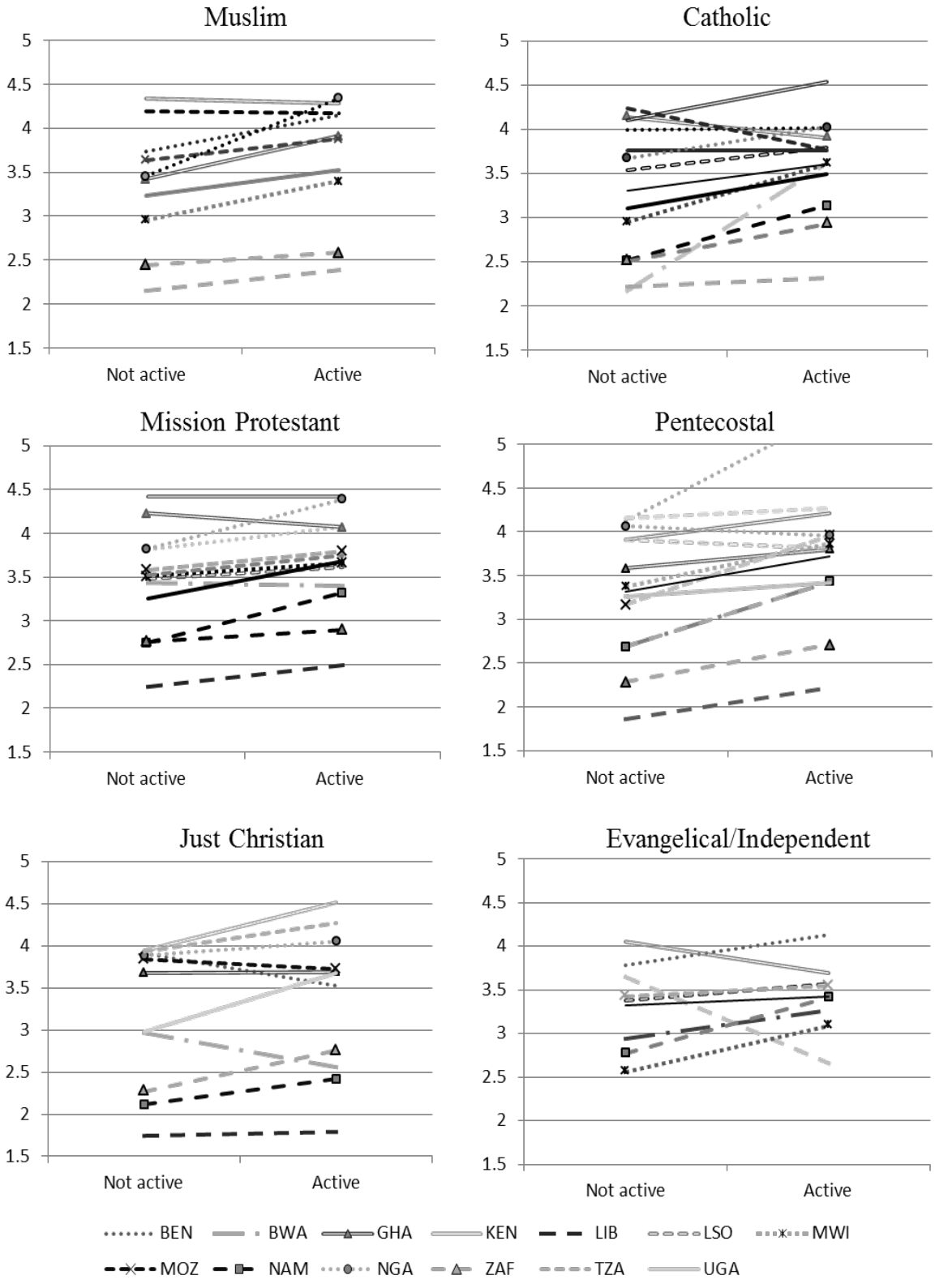


Figure 3.3: Primary education predicting interest in politics, by religious affiliation (Afrobarometer 2008)

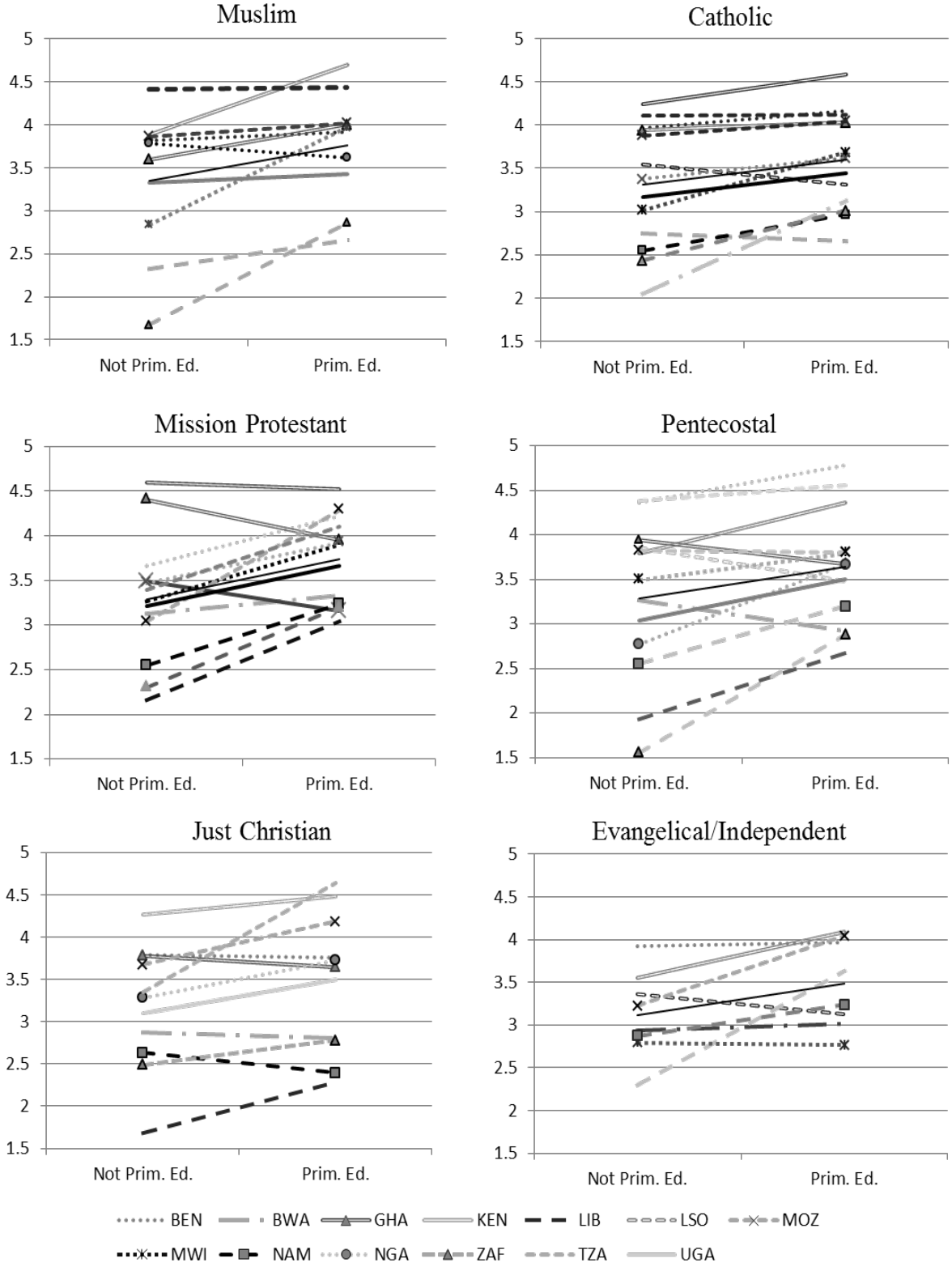


Figure 3.5: Interaction slopes of political engagement by religious affiliation and closeness to regional party in power

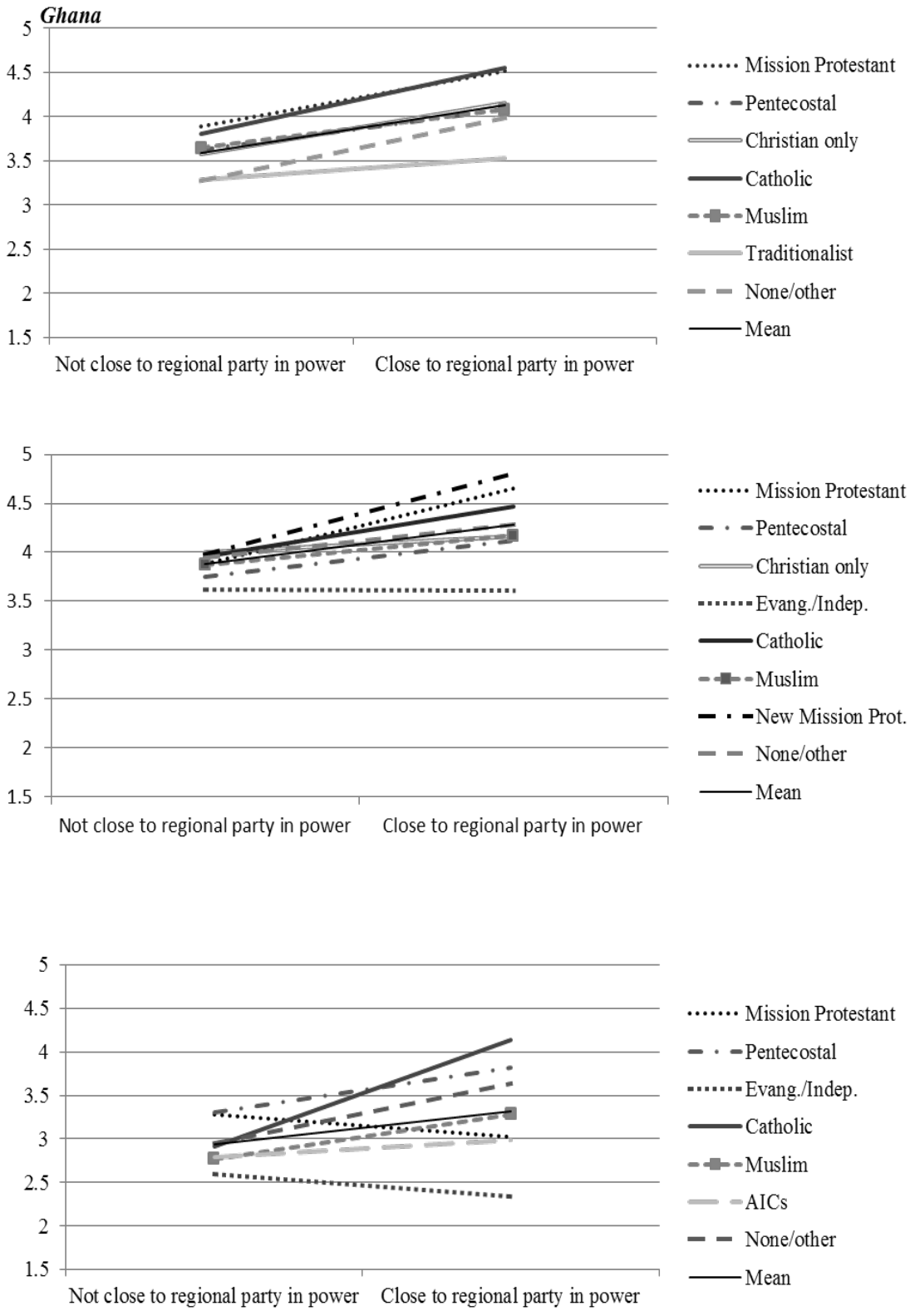
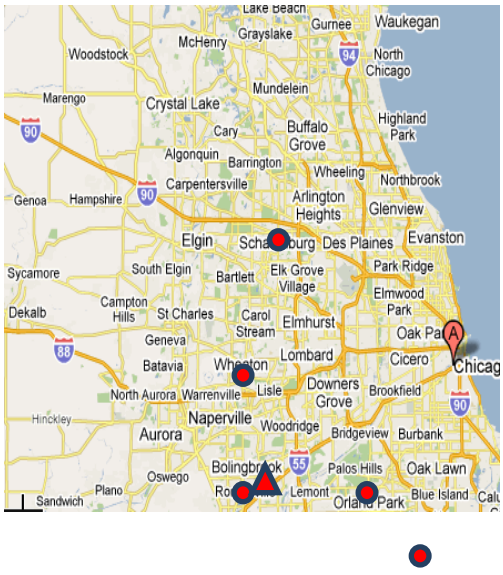


Figure 4.1: Congregations and homes of members in the Chicago area, city limits

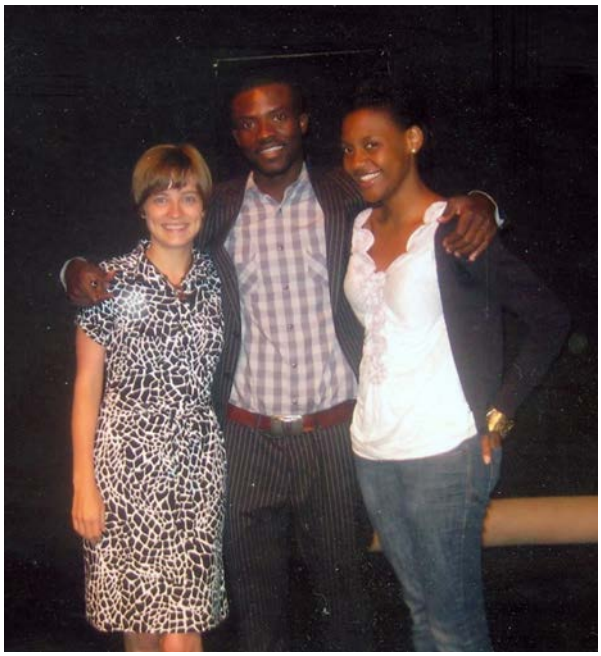
Figure 4.2: Congregations and homes of members in Chicago, metro area



Circles = residences; triangles = congregations

Figure 4.3: Photograph during group singing at Beacon Ministries

Figure 4.4: Photograph of congregation members



APPENDIX B: A THEORETICAL REVIEW OF GHANAIAN HISTORY, 1680-PRESENT

Global Trade and the Social Organization of the Asante State: 1680s-1831

Today's African states were built in and through global exchange, long pre-dating the colonial period. In contrast to earlier conceptions of Africa as an isolated continent or a passive victim of 18th and 19th-century colonialism, a new picture of West African history is emerging that portrays indigenous kingdoms as instrumental players in the initial development of Atlantic trade (Thornton 1998). As Bayart (2000:218) has argued,

> The antiquity of Christianity in Ethiopia, the spread of Islam on the coasts, the establishment of Austronesian colonies in Madagascar, regular patterns of trade with China, India, the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean are all evidence of the degree to which eastern and southern Africa were for centuries integrated into the pre-modern economic systems of what scholars used to call the Orient.

The cosmopolitanism of today's urban, coastal Ghanaians—to which Beacon Ministries consciously adapts itself—must therefore be understood as historical and traditional, rather than as a "rupture" with the past. The people groups and states historically comprising what is now Ghana have long been shaped by interactions with both European and Mediterranean civilizations; and have adapted complex political arrangements and forms of social organization that account for diversity, migration, and fluid solidarities. The region has straddled two of the most important global trade routes in history, and therefore migration, resettlement, cultural mixing, and adaptation have been a part of the Ghanaian heritage from the earliest known records (Akyeampong 1997; Arhin 1983; Daaku 1972).

Arguably, the political predecessor of the modern day Republic of Ghana is the Asante or Ashanti kingdom, which is perhaps the most-heavily researched of any pre-colonial state in sub-Saharan Africa (McCaskie 1983). The modern-day city of Kumasi in central Ghana was the traditional center of this kingdom, and throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries it was a hub of state administration, commerce, and mixing between Christian, Muslim, and traditional religious elements (Wilks 1996; Allman 1991). Although the Asante were by no means the only pre-colonial ethno-linguistic grouping in what is now Ghana—the Ga, the Ewe, and the Fante being three of the most significant—by the late 17th century the Asante empire had extended its rule over the entirety of modern-day Ghana and the southern Ivory Coast (Arhin 1983). The Asante were Twi-speaking peoples—also often referred to as Akan—and the non-Twi-speaking areas surrounding the kingdom to the north and the southwest were incorporated as protectorates through military expansion. In outlying areas, land ownership was passed through matrilineal clans, and although the state did not tax the land itself it did tax the products of land ownership, primarily gold dust (Wilks 1996; Arhin 1983; Daaku 1972). The social division—and the inter-dependent relationship—between rural peasantry and the urban society surrounding Kumasi developed significantly before colonial rule (Arhin 1983).

The consolidation of the Asante state at Kumasi occurred in the early 1680s under the leadership of the first Asantehene ("king of the Asante") Osei Tutu (Fynn 1971). Since the boundaries of the Asante state expanded to roughly the size of modern-day Ghana shortly after this time, and since the Asante state dominated the area until the British takeover in about 1901, I rely heavily on key events within Asante governance and trade as the basis of my historical periodization. Anthropological and historical

studies have addressed numerous aspects of Asante religion, morality, economy, and political structure, and noted that the trajectory of its rise and fall is highly instructive on the influence international commerce in goods and ideas had on sub-Saharan Africa. Although their origins have been the subject of an ongoing historiographic debate (see Klein 1996), the Akan as they are understood today are the largest ethno-linguistic group in Ghana today and the Twi language, along with English, is now the lingua franca of Ghana's most populous areas.

Up until the Asantehene Osei Tutu's rule in the 1680s, the region was marked by several long-term trajectories. The first was the influence of Muslim overland trade from the north, and the presence of primarily-Muslim foreigners in the capital of Kumasi (Allman 1991; Silverman and Owusu-Ansah 1989; Arhin 1983). The Malian Empire of Western Sudan, site of much fabled wealth and potentially the main architect of trade from the Western to the Eastern reaches of the Sahara, heavily relied on the small states surrounding Kumasi and just to the north for supplies of gold and kola nuts. The Wangara were a particular group of Hausa traders that acted as intermediaries between the gold-producing states of West Africa and the Islamic Mediterranean kingdoms. They had a strong presence in Kumasi and down to the coastland pre-dating the arrival of the Portuguese, who were followed by the other significant European powers. This trade system brought increasing stores of wealth to Akan states, and the Muslim religious and cultural influence continues to be dominant in northern parts of Ghana (Wilks 1996). In the 14th century, cowrie shell exchange value in the kingdom of Sudan agreed with the 15th century Portuguese exchange value on the coast of Ghana, indicating continuity of trade between these two major powers (Daaku 1972). The most important trade posts

were the roughly twenty European forts along the coast and the towns of Buna and Bengho at the northern end of the Akan region.

The second major trajectory that culminated in the consolidation of the Asante state was the clearing of the forest areas surrounding Kumasi for food production. An "agricultural revolution" took place during the 1600s, in which foraging modes of production gave way to agricultural modes of production. At the same time, there was a corresponding "industrial revolution," in which new technologies—and the multiplication of slave labor—for the extraction of gold dramatically increased the amount of available currency and trade goods (Wilks 1993). Most importantly, the cultural importance of entrepreneurship, and the elevation of entrepreneurs as a distinct class, accompanied these changes and thus existed on a widespread scale roughly around the same time period as historians have noted the "birth" of capitalism in early modern Europe.

The social arrangement of Akan forest peoples into matriclans and the establishment of the Asante monarchy occurred as a culmination and response to this shift in modes of production (Wilks 1993). The late 17th century was therefore marked by coordinated changes in economic production (i.e. to an agricultural system), social organization (i.e. to the matriclan), and political development (i.e. the origination of the Asante monarchical state). Thus, when Osei Tutu became the chief of the Kumasi state in the 1680s and coordinated his recognition as central monarch by the chiefs of surrounding estates, he was both responding to new possibilities in terms of wealth and conquest as well as innovatively developing an appropriate form of economic and political organization.

It is notable that although trade was the major source of Asante's wealth, the king himself made no attempt to monopolize trade. Based on the established system of land tenure, trade was initiated by individuals who then had rights to whatever they produced, though the land itself was communal property. "The king defined the lack of taxation as a moral issue: 'I cannot tell them [the traders] to give me gold when they buy and sell ... but I must give them gold and provisions and send them home happy and rich, that it may be known in other countries that I am a great king and know what is right.'" (Daaku 1972: 244) This, along with the refusal to grant any foreign traders monopoly, was based in a value of hospitality. The king's wealth was "potential rather than real", and thus his role was to ensure that trade could continue freely.

Until the 17th century the demand from both the northern and southern trade routes was for gold, along with a demand for kola nuts coming from the north. The Portuguese set up their first fort at what is now Elmina in 1482, and their peak years of importing gold were from 1490-1550. The Dutch, British, and Germans followed shortly, none of whom ever gained a monopoly over the region (Wilks 1996). Gold was the primary vehicle for positioning the Asante state at the center of the world economic system, and the accumulation and conspicuous consumption of gold had great symbolic significance in the emerging Kumasi urban culture. The resulting ideal of the "big man"—a translation of the Akan word abrempon—as the wealthy protector and ideal vision of society came to dominate the ambitions of both natives and migrants in the capital (McCaskie 1983). Indeed, as the Asante state expanded its bureaucracy, foreign slaves in the Asantehene's service were frequently given prestigious new posts and became quite wealthy through trade at the same time. The relationship between "capitalist" and "administrative" classes

in 18th-century Asante has never been clear-cut in the historical record, but most sources indicate that office-holding and the accumulation of personal wealth were intimately intertwined (Wilks 1996; McCaskie 1986, 1983). Thus, the nature of Asante economic and political organization combined a mixture of attributive and merit-based status. Individual entrepreneurs could freely capitalize on the European and Mediterranean desire for gold for decades, and such individual accumulation was admired as a mark of ingenuity and success. At the same time, important offices, especially chiefdoms, followed laws of matrilineal succession, and Osei Tutu's government administrators were usually groomed for public service within clan units. The abrempon typically managed an estate for food production, owned slave labor to cultivate that land, attracted free settlers to that land to cultivate it and provide a source of tax revenue, and conspicuously exhibited his wealth as a symbol of his entrepreneurial success. One could only be an abrempon, however, at the recognition of the king; and to hold that position implied that the ultimate beneficiary of one's wealth was the state, embodied in the king, rather than one's blood successors. The elevation of wealth accumulation as a virtue made it possible for newly-rich businessmen to vie for political office, and such offices could be bought; yet all such offices—called "stools"—were also established by the king and granted to a given abrempon and his successors. Thus, matrilineal succession of political office was the general rule; but it was also fluid, and could often be displaced by kingly intervention on behalf of more deserving (i.e. wealthier) up-and-comings.

Naturally, the question arises whether pre-colonial Asante exhibited a true "capitalist class" in the manner of Europe at the time. The answer from the historical record appears to be yes and no. Asante entrepreneurs were "capitalists" in the sense that

they did invest in land and labor, exerted a measure of individual control over their wealth, and sought—and often gained—political power on the basis of this wealth. On the other hand, there are also indicators that their ownership was subordinate to that of the king. Perhaps the greatest source of revenue for the Asante state during 18th and 19th centuries was through "death duties", a highly complex social ritual in which a dead abrempon's wealth was commanded and distributed by the king. At the death of the "big man", assuming he had not been disgraced or brought to poverty, his wealth became the property of the state, and thus his accumulation of wealth during his lifetime was ultimately seen as a service to the nation. Finally, there is evidence that although these entrepreneurs did reinvest profits in land and labor, they did so primarily as a means to gain social status rather than as an end in itself.

The complicated mixture of bureaucratic and traditional authority—to use Weberian language—was perhaps best illustrated in the interaction between pre-colonial and British logics of rule later on. As Wilks (1993:137) notes,

> The nature of the intimate connection that came to exist in Asante between money, investment, and advancement, is well illustrated from the period between the British assumption of direct civil administration of Asante affairs in 1901 and the introduction of a system of indirect rule in 1935. Few matters absorbed so much of the time and energy of the colonial administrators in the period as that of succession to office, and in the innumerable 'stool disputes' that occurred no feature so constantly eluded the understanding of the administrators as that of the intricate interplay of considerations of ancestry on the one hand and money on the other.

This intricate system originated in the late 17th-century period, and though it certainly changed over the following centuries, it continues to have salience for how power, wealth, and social obligation are understood in Ghana today.

In the 150 years following the formal establishment of the Asante kingdom at Kumasi, the bureaucratic state expanded through increasing trade, interaction with external powers, and wars of conquest. Since both gold and kola nuts were labor-intensive products, during this period the increasing demand created a labor shortage for the Akan. The slave trade expanded in response as the primary source of new labor, and slaves were often acquired through the many wars of expansion between Asante and the surrounding states. Such slaves became central members of a given clan, were more often female than male, and provided their labor to the kin unit and usually took their name (Wilks 1993; Daaku 1972). Slave exports began to surpass gold exports, and Asante trade began to be more and more dominated by the European interests relative to those coming from the north (Wilks 1993). On both the African side and the European side, a handful of major players competed to prevent any one group from gaining a monopoly over African exports. The Portuguese, Dutch, and British were as likely to side against Asante in local wars, in order to prevent their full control over the coastal trade. Although they each made numerous attempts to gain privileged trade status relative to their counterparts, the Asantehene always refused; and in any case, the lack of state control over trade made such efforts futile. The coastal region—like Kumasi—therefore became home to a lively, open trade and a diverse society of merchants, government administrators, craftsmen, Muslim scholars, Christian missionaries, clan chiefs, slaves, and military men.

Finally, it is notable that the expansion of the Asante kingdom that began with Osei Tutu and continued through the 18th-century was as much politically as economically motivated. Osei Tutu portrayed himself as the leader of a union of clans, first and foremost, whose political integration was reflective of perceived cultural

similarities (Arhin 1967). Obviously, the idea of "shared" culture among the Asante and neighboring peoples was fluid over this period of 150 years, and often the desire for unification was one-sided on the part of the Asantehene. There were also variations in how similar neighbors were perceived to be, with other Akan states being treated differently after appropriation than non-Akans (Arhin 1967). Nevertheless, this fluidity, and the motivation to craft an Asante "citizenship" based on shared culture, underscores the persistent presence of diversity and malleable notions of identity (Meyer 2002; Rathbone 1996).

Up until the colonial period, boundaries and allegiances throughout modern-day Ghana were perpetually in flux, due to the persistent need to respond to external trade demands and to incorporate foreigners. Even patterns of family life were incredibly diverse, as opposed to the fixed picture of "traditional" clan-based society that is often given. Traditional patterns were alternately matrilineal or patrlineal, matrilocal or patrilocal, polygynous or monogynous; and within those bounds they could vary greatly in terms of household arrangements, bridewealth payments, and the fluidity of kinship bonds. A virtual cottage industry of studies has arisen to chronicle the variety of marriage and kinship practices among just those peoples living in modern-day Ghana (Kronenfeld 2009; Hanson 2004; Abarry 1997; Verdon 1982; Greene 1981; Kalu 1981; Amoo 1946). Thus, boundary-making was a relevant issue in the pre-colonial world of Ghana—as it is for Ghanaian migrants today—as well as a product of fluid rather than fixed identities and practices.

Expanding the Bureaucracy: 1800 to 1901

The transition into the 19th century was marked by a series of military conflicts between Asante and its more powerful neighbors, including the Denkyera, Akyem, Fante, and Wassa, which were all Akan states located along the coast. Conquered states had different relations to Kumasi, some becoming actual provinces of Asante and others remaining tributaries or protectorates. Thus, it is more accurate to speak of "Greater Asante" as being roughly contiguous with the Gold Coast area during this time, rather than a true Asante Empire (Yarak 1986; Arhin 1967). Between 1806 and 1807, the Asantehene successfully defeated the Fante and the Wassa kingdoms, which were British-protected colonies along the coast; and in response, these two groups laid siege to the Asantes traditional ally, Elmina. Elmina was one of the most important ports of trade, inhabited traditionally by the Edena people and also home to an important Dutch fort. Both the Dutch and the Asante army contributed to the liberation of Elmina from the Fante and the Wassa armies, establishing a close alliance between the three groups predicated on Elmina paying tribute to Asante (Yarak 1986).

Although after these wars Asante reached its peak expansion, in the first two decades of the 19th century several important changes took place that contributed to the eventual devolution of Asante power. First, the European powers abolished the slave trade, starting with the Danes in 1803, the British in 1807, and the Dutch in 1815. The 1811 invasion of Akyem—another Akan state along the coast—and the 1818-1819 conflict with Gyaman in the north produced a particularly large surplus of war prisoners, putting a strain on the Asantehene's ability to support them since they could no longer be sold as slaves. It has been estimated that during the 18th century, a total of roughly 7

million African slaves were supplied to the Americas and the West Indies (Thornton 1998; Fynn 1971). To lose an export of such a huge magnitude had a dramatic effect on the kingdoms of the Gold Coast and their amount of leverage over the terms of trade. Yet the local demand for European goods, particularly firearms, was only increasing as the Africans' two major exports—gold and slaves—were losing value.

The Congress of Vienna in 1815 brought several European conflicts to an end and opened trade even further, making room for the British in particular to pull ahead of their contemporaries. Whereas the Portuguese and the Dutch had for centuries limited their local political impact—and the Dutch had paid rents to the Asantehene for their forts, signifying their position as protectorates of the king—the British in the 19th century had a different approach. They had persistently been more involved in local conflicts, and had a much stronger presence through missionary and colonist activity in the interior. Their involvement would eventually culminate in open war with Asante and the establishment of the Gold Coast colonial government.

In 1831, the Anglo-Asante Treaty of Peace and Free Commerce was signed, signifying both the ascendance of British power in the region and an important transition in Asante social organization. Imports of British cotton increased four-fold immediately following this period, and the state began to expand its control over trade in order to provide the needed infrastructure. Recognizing the need for modernization, Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin enacted reforms in the 1830s to decrease military power and expand the administrative establishment. Wilks (1993) describes this period as one of "cohorts of administrators working together to maintain the framework of civil society, articulating an ideology of nationhood" (324); and in a seminal article asserts the "formal-rational"

nature of Asante bureaucracy in the 19th century (Wilks 1966). At the same time, the wars of expansion in the earlier part of the century had only sparked more resistance to the increasing authority of Kumasi. As the Asantehene worked to expand the bureaucracy, the merchant-capitalist class became increasingly alienated from the traditional state and began to assert greater rights of individual ownership. Many of these entrepreneurs began to leave Kumasi for the British Gold Coast colony on the coast, drawn by the more laissez-faire economic philosophies promoted by the British (McCaskie 1983). By 1868, the Dutch had begun handing over many of their claims to the British, including Elmina in 1870. This transfer was particularly symbolic, since Elmina was still seen as a protectorate of the Asantehene, who refused to concede it to the British. Although Asantehene Kofi Kankari attempted to "re-take" Elmina in 1873, he was defeated by the British and Elmina was sacked by the Fantes (Yarak 1986).

The rural population of the area also suffered at the hands of the increasingly state-managed system at this time. While having developed a demand for British imports, they were forced to pay the inflated prices of both private and public retailers, and had little leverage given that demand for agricultural products had decreased so dramatically. The region was becoming primarily an importer, rather than exporter of goods, in dramatic contrast to the prior centuries; and although in the short run the trade system was bringing wealth to the natural treasury, in the long run it put a strain on the relationship between the state and the public. Indebtedness became a major problem among the rural population, and the Asantehene began to appropriate inheritances to collect on unpaid debt (McCaskie 1983, 1986; Arhin 1983).

Clearly, then, the relationship between social classes and public trust in the government were strained preceding British rule. In the 1880s, this tension came to a head. Asantehene Kofi Kankari (1867-1874) was more militaristic than his predecessor and invaded areas that had come under de facto British control. The British retaliated and gained control of Kumasi for a day, forcing Kankari out. Although they did not regain control until 1894, this event destabilized the monarchy and sparked a period of civil war. The business class that had retreated to the Gold Coast formed a military resistance government in 1879, and independent rural revolts took place through the following decade. Kankari's successor, Mensa Bonsu, was forced out of power by a coup in 1883. The government was then taken over by Owusu Koko; while his brother, Owusu Ansa, was favored by the merchant class and established a rival government in Cape Coast. Full-blown civil war broke out in 1887, which was momentarily suspended by the Asantehemaa (queen mother) Yaa Kyaa in 1888. She established general amnesty and held up Agyeman Prempeh as a new successor, whom the Cape Coast resistance agreed to recognize as ruler. The British, however, refused to support either the resistance or the Asantehene during this period, repeatedly sending proposals to the Asantehene to come under protectorate status. After being denied several times, they eventually invaded Kumasi and established the Gold Coast colony in 1901.

Before the shift of the mid- to late-1800s, there was arguably no lack of social trust underlying the Asante political and economic system. Indeed, it appears to have intertwined elements of personalized and generalized trust in an innovative way, combining an entrepreneurial system of achieved status and a political system built on trust-inducing rituals and ties of kinship. Yet as rapid external and internal changes

unfolded, and the state became increasingly wealthy, a series of Asantehenes came to abuse their authority and renege on the public's expectations. As McCaskie (1986: 6) describes it, "Politics as contractual and protective structure had visibly collapsed"; and during the 1880s and 1890s the state exercised considerable violence against its citizens. Mensa Bonsu was exiled to Sawua after the coup of 1883, and took much of the gold in the state treasury with him. In doing so, "Mensa Bonsu betrayed his trust, thereby by default or example opening the doors for everyone else" (ibid). It is telling that while the collection of death duties through the 18th century was viewed as the right of the king and the natural service of the wealthy man to the wider community, by the end of the 1887-1888 civil conflicts Agyeman Prempeh was forced to renounce his right to levy death duties in order to regain his position as the Asantehene. Thus, this practice which had formerly been symbolic of the symbiotic relationship between the ruler, the wealthy classes, and the peasantry, came to be seen as abusive and outdated.

This convergence of events eventually resulted in the popular rejection of the prior communalist system of rule, in favor of a system of individual ownership. However, this transition took place without the structures of law or the political checks and balances necessary to ensure reliable generalized trust. In other words, the colonial and post-colonial state brought about a restructuring of governance according to the model of Western liberal democracy, which relies on a conceptual and institutional separation of private, personal and public, generalized relations. Yet generalized trust could not be sufficiently supported in the absence of strong legal systems, multi-party elections, nationalist ideology, and a productive private sector (Bates 2008; Fukuyama 2004; Bayart 2000; Clapham 1994). The result was a rupture between the political economic system

and the life-worlds of citizens: the former built according to a Western model of rational-legal bureaucracy and the latter continuing to follow in the model of personalized relations and "patrimonialism". Hence, the "crisis of trust" that persists today has its roots in the external and internal transitions of this period.

Christian missionaries have not been central players in this account so far, primarily because they had very little presence beyond the coastal colonies until the late 19th century. Although a number of fabled journeys into the interior by religiously-motivated adventurers took place throughout the 1800s, there was very little lasting impact on the majority of the African population. In fact, the era of direct British rule was the period of greatest Muslim expansion, in terms of converts (Isichei 2004). The near-complete conversion of the continent to various branches of Christianity and Islam that exists today took place in a period of roughly 100 years, after the colonial system came to dominate governance and infrastructure. It has been estimated that there were roughly 10 million Christians in Africa in 1900, compared to 300 million 100 years later (Isichei 2004).

On the other hand, several important private schools were founded by Wesleyan and German Presbyterian missionaries along the coast during the 1800s, which had a different type of impact: the training of educated elites (see Woodberry and Shah 2004). Educationally Ghana has far outstripped most other former British colonies in Africa, due in large part to the early existence of private Christian schools along the coast. The graduates of these schools often went on higher education in Europe; and though this group was relatively small, they had enormous influence over Ghana's later transition to

independence as well as African political philosophy and culture (Gifford 2004; Morrison 2004; Peil 1995; Wilks 1993; Robertson 1977).

As mission-dominated education began to gain salience as a marker of elite status in the late 1800s, important men and women were drawn to positions in the church as something that should naturally follow from their existing status. This is not to suggest that conversion on the part of Africans in the Gold Coast colony was purely strategic, or that Christian ideas had no influence or appeal in their own right. Rather, the process was driven by both the exchange of spiritual philosophy as well material and social class considerations, within the context of an African worldview that—generally speaking—readily incorporated multiple symbols and non-human personalities (Anderson 2001; Magesa 1998; Thornton 1998; Isichei 1995). As this process gained speed, Christian institutions began to gain more widespread influence over marriage patterns, promoting a contractual and conjugal model of marriage eventually bound up with legal recognition (Boni 2001; Kalu 1981; Amoo 1946). Through their dominance over marriage and education, the Christian churches became gate-keepers of social status through the colonial period; and although post-colonial Ghana has never experienced open religious conflict, the divide between Christian and Muslim areas was deepened through this process and came to be bound up with emerging regional and ethnic divisions.

The Interlude of Foreign Rule: 1901-1957

Although it was one of the most important of Britain's colonies in Africa in terms of trade, the Gold Coast was also one of the shortest-lived. Direct rule only lasted roughly 50 years, following the British invasion of Kumasi and the subjection of the Asantehene that had been building for roughly a decade. During this period, two geographical and philosophic centers of power existed in tension: the Gold Coast Colony and Kumasi. In the former, the disillusioned Asante entrepreneurs that had fled the control of the Asantehene vied for position in the new colonial government. In the latter, the position of Asantehene continued to be locally acknowledged—as it is today—but suffered at the hands of British non-recognition and popular disillusionment. The Golden Stool itself, the long-time symbol of the Asantehene's political power, was hidden in various villages from 1896 until 1921, when it was vandalized and stripped of its gold by several Asante young men of "frustrated ambitions" who believed that "the state represented by the Golden Stool was the enemy" (McCaskie 1986: 16). This event sparked a huge mourning ceremony in Kumasi, and in many ways symbolized the violent severance of the state and the spiritual philosophy of the Asante people.

The capitalist Gold Coast "refugees" played a huge role in shaping the direction of both colonial and pre-colonial Ghana, and were an interesting picture of political ambivalence. They warily supported the annexation of Asante and its holdings by the British, envisioning the possibility of a progressive modern state. They retained the cultural imagery of the big man of wealth and status while they had shed the "constraints of the historic ideology surrounding accumulation, wealth and belief…In terms of belief they tended towards a calculatedly-vague syncretism. Many became Christians, some

doubtless as believers, many as a mark of 'modernity'" (McCaskie 1986: 7, 12). In so doing, they came to represent the "coterminous pulls of the past and the present" (*ibid:* 8), and the rupture between the structure of power in the new society and the underlying worldviews of Africans themselves. Even Asante itself, although the most meaningful political entity pre-dating British rule, encompassed diverse peoples with diverse identities, whose degree of allegiance to the rapidly-expanding state varied. The worldviews and allegiances of the public are unfortunately the first elements to be lost in history, and so most assessments of pre-colonial group identifications are barely more than speculations. Nevertheless, there is evidence enough of the diversity of groups that came under Asante rule in a very short period of time and the conflicting interpretations of what it is to be "Ghanaian" in the post-colonial era. The Gold Coast businessmen that gained the most influence in the colonial and post-colonial government were in many ways the most powerful picture of this diversity and ambivalence, and were the pre-cursors of those Ghanaians that are most likely to migrate today.

During this time the Gold Coast was fertile ground for religious revivalism. The movement of William Wade Harris, a Methodist lay preacher from Liberia, was instrumental in sparking popular conversion to an African version of Christianity in the early 20th century (Anderson 2001; Isichei 1995). Harris was imprisoned in Liberia in 1910 for leading an anti-colonial uprising, and while there received a vision of the angel Gabriel that sparked his career as a prophet. Upon his release, he embarked on a preaching tour from Liberia into the Cote d'Ivoire and the Gold Coast that lasted several years. He preached an interesting mix of African and Christian elements, rejecting "fetishes" and other elements of traditional religion, and yet also emphasizing the

centrality of miracles, speaking in tongues, and healing to the religious life. He also rejected Western dress in favor of a long white turban. He supported the European churches, but his followers—which numbered in the hundreds of thousands by the time of his death—frequently formed independent congregations that persist today (Anderson 2001). Even beyond their actual size, however, the Harrist churches initiated a model of African prophetic movements that expanded rapidly across Western Africa in the early 1900s. Although these churches are often categorized separately from mission church denominations—just like Ghana's Charismatic churches today—they saw themselves as fully Christian rather than as a rejection of or alternative to European-style Christianity. For many who lived away from colonial centers, African-prophet-led miracle services and teaching was their first experience with Christian elements. The African-Independent Churches as discrete organizations tended to formed out of disagreements with the mission churches over ecclesiastical control, although eventually the balance of power in mission churches themselves shifted from European transplants to local Africans (Jenkins 2006; Gifford 2004; Robert 2000; Isichei 1995).

As stated earlier, one of the goals of this historical narrative is to emphasize continuity in the cosmopolitanism of Western Africa. The tendency of colonial and post-colonial studies has understandably been to focus on the ruptures in African society caused by European intervention; and rupture has of course been present in this narrative as well. Yet my aim is to give equal weight to both continuity and change, arguing that although the disjuncture between social structure and the underlying moral system was dramatic, colonial rule did not destroy African civilization nor did it thrust a parochially "dark" continent into an existing world-system with no room at the top (Bayart 2000;

Thornton 1998). One of the reasons that such disjuncture tends to be overemphasized is that pre-colonial and post-colonial histories tend to be recounted separately, resulting in "a rupture in African historiography" (McCaskie 1986: 19) somewhere in the beginning-middle of the colonial period. Pre-colonial histories take European conquest as their ending point and post-colonial histories take it as their starting point; and thus the perception of colonization as an event of near-complete rupture is perhaps unintentionally propagated. As I have tried to show, however, African societies in modern-day Ghana have experienced multiple centuries of ongoing cultural and economic exchange with diverse societies beyond their own, and the colonial period was one phase in this process marked by a dramatic shift in the balance of power between Africans and Europeans.

Given this point, it is not surprising that African reactions to colonial rule were both diverse and contentious. A decentralized system of rule was established in 1935, allowing for the creation of numerous political organizations that rallied around ethnic, ideological, religious, and linguistic commonalities. Some well-documented examples include the Muslim Association Party, founded by urban "stranger" (i.e. as a opposed to Asante converts) Muslims in Accra and Kumasi who had their own local political representation under the British (Allman 1991); and the Convention People's Party founded by Kwame Nkrumah in 1946, which became the first party to rule immediately following independence (Morrison 2004; Owusu 1989). Nkrumah became well-known as an out-spoken advocate of pan-Africanism who legislated against tribalism and factionalism during his rule. Yet the tradition of popular rule and the project of crafting nationalism he embodied were not his inventions alone, but rather the convergence of major trajectories within the region's history, namely the built-in cycle of popular revolt

within chieftaincies and the implications of mass migration and Asante consolidation (Owusu 1989).

The transition to independence was driven by Nkrumah and others like him who had been educated in mission schools and frequently overseas. As several authors have noted, In the 1950s Ghana was in a good position politically and economically relative to other post-colonial states, with a per capita income equal to South Korea's (Gifford 2004; Herbst 1993). Ghana's first national elections occurred in 1951 and were dominated by the CPP. These elections were followed by two more in 1954 and 1956, in which other Ghanaian parties attempted unsuccessfully to challenge Nkrumah's party (Allman 1991). After the 1956 elections, the CPP had gained so much influence that it was able to lead the country to independence. It was the first to do so in colonial Africa, and therefore served as a model of post-colonial transition and African self-governance.

Independence and Reorientation: 1957 to the present

Almost immediately after achieving independence, Nkrumah placed a ban on political parties based on ethnic, religious, or regional affiliations, in keeping with his vision of Ghanaian-national and pan-African unity (Allman 1991; Owusu 1989). Yet signs of regional and ethno-linguistic allegiances persisted on the political playing field. The Asante kingdom, for example, continued to exist under the rule of the Ghanaian national government, and Asante business elites rallied against the populism of the CPP under the banner of the National Liberation Movement (McCaskie 1986). These descendants of the 19th-century capitalists discussed above stood in an ambivalent relationship to the emerging Ghanaian state and in tension to the grassroots Asante and the many other ethno-linguistic groups that were consolidated in this period. Therefore, despite the initial success of the CPP—and the valorization of Nkrumah that continues to this day—a dizzying diversity of group interests were in place by the end of colonial rule.

Economically, Ghana had promise at the outset of the independence period, given the existence of a sizeable business class, extensive natural resources, relatively well-developed infrastructure, and a large civil service sector (Herbst 1993). Unfortunately, 1957 was perhaps its peak in the 20th century. Economic contraction began almost immediately and was rapid even compared to other nations in Africa. By 1982, it was ranked only twenty-first among forty-four African countries (Herbst 1993). The 60s, 70s, and 80s saw a series of coups, each enacted under the auspices of purging the government from the corruption of the existing regime (Gifford 2004; Morrison 2004; Owusu 1989). Consolidation and economic reform have persistently been unrealized goals in political discourse. Political parties have largely been unable to unify constituencies on ideological

bases, although ethnic/regional affiliation does not determine party membership either. The situation has been more complicated, with relevant divisions including business classes, educated elites, rural groups in the north, Muslims, Ewes, and "coastal" vs. "forest" Akans , a distinction which maps onto the rural-urban divide. Today, most regions are evenly-divided between the two major parties, which are the National People's Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC, and the modern re-invention of the CPP) (Morrison 2004). Thus, party affiliation since independence has not been simplistically determined by ethnic identity, but rather ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic characteristics all play into the complexity of divisions in Ghanaian society. The populist style of the NDC and the liberal-elitist style of the NPP have formed another relevant dichotomy that transcends religion, region, and ethnicity and has been in place through the post-colonial period (Morrison 2004).

As celebrated as Nkrumah is today, his rule did not last long past the initial push for independence. The beginning of the 1960s marked a long slide into economic failure, facilitated at least in part by aggressive manipulation of the economy on the part of the state (Herbst 1993). Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 by the National Liberation Council and replaced by Kofi Busia, an Oxford-trained sociologist (Morrison 2004; Gifford 2004; Herbst 1993). His Second Republic represented the liberal-elitist faction of businessmen and intellectuals protesting the autocratic populism of Nkrumah. After four years of rule, Busia was overthrown by a military council under the leadership of General Ignatius Acheampong, who argued again that his coup was necessary to rescue Ghana from corruption and economic stagnation (Herbst 1993). Each one of these coups was

rich with the spiritual symbolism of regeneration, harkening back to the political theater of the Asantehene and the Golden Stool (Owusu 1989, 1986).

Perhaps the most infamous of Ghana's leaders, Flight-Lieutenant Jerry J. Rawlings, forcefully wrested control of the government from Acheampong in the mid-year of 1979. His passionate idealism and socialist leanings stirred the nation into a new fervor of hope, although his regime was also violent to the opposition and no more successful in reviving Ghana's failing economy. Elections scheduled for 1979 went forward as planned, resulting in the transfer of the presidency to Hilla Limann; but just two years later, Rawlings staged a second coup on a day that looms large in the Ghanaian political imagination: December 31, 1981 (Gifford 2004). This time, his socialist ideology was even more explicit, and the retributive violence he enacted even more extensive.

Despite the liveliness of the political process through this period and the seemingly-endless series of political "prophets", Ghana's economy consistently declined through the 70s and 80s. Contrary to the discourse of ambitious politicians and international development fads, however, there was no one sufficient cause of the recession. Ghana's infrastructure was built around the export of raw goods, of which cocoa was the most important during the 70s, during a time that growing economies were increasingly investing in manufactured export goods and new technologies. At the same time, the Ghanaian state consistently overvalued exchange rates and set low prices for cocoa farmers. The result was that their share in the international market dropped from 29 percent in 1970 to 17 percent in 1980. By 1981, Ghana was receiving only $13.3 dollars

per capita in net official development assistance given the skepticism felt by international donors towards the new Limann government (Herbst 1993).

Migration patterns also figure in the story of Ghana's economic decline. Throughout the period of Asante power and even into the colonial period, Ghana was primarily a migration-receiving country. At first, its neighbors came for trade, and later they came to take advantage of the educational system. In the 1970s, however, this pattern dramatically reversed, such that an estimated 2 million Ghanaians migrated to Nigeria and Cote D'Ivoire between 1974 and 1981 (Peil 1995). This was in part stimulated by Nigeria's major oil boom of the 70s; and yet with Nigeria's economy began to fail, the government responded by forcing the repatriation of nearly 1 million Ghanaians in 1981-82. Their re-entry only put further strain on an economy that was also suffering from bad rains and poor harvests (Gifford 2004; Peil 1995).

In 1983, after his second coup which had been even more forcefully socialist in ideology than his first, Rawlings made a dramatic left turn to rescue Ghana's failing economy. Available development assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank was expanding, and although it was tied to the political ideology of neoliberalism and economic reform, it was a ready and generous source of funds. The Ghanaian government's request of $575 million for economic recovery was met by a commitment of $818 million from international donors (Herbst 1993). For the first time, a Ghanaian president enacted extensive reforms of currency exchange, devaluating the Ghanaian currency relative to the dollar despite extensive initial resistance from Ghana's urban dwellers who were the main consumers of foreign imports. Ghana's economy—

although far from booming—has grown 5-6 percent per year since this and other reforms were enacted (Herbst 1993).

Rawlings was voted out in peaceful elections in 2000, replaced by J.A. Kufuor of the NPP who served two terms. In the most recent elections in 2008, he was replaced by John Atta-Mills, Rawlings' chosen successor in his early years and yet more recently, a self-described voice for change. Accusations of corruption across party lines continue; one relevant example recorded in field notes from 2009 regards the new presidential palace. Construction was initiated by Kufuor during his regime, and yet as time went on it became clear to the public that the project was way over budget and the administration was not forthcoming about its allocation of funds. Hence, when Atta-Mills came to power, he committed that he would not move into the impressive new palace until the funds were accounted for and the negligent parties had been appropriately prosecuted.

Political science has in the past 20 years been preoccupied with the question of economic mis-management by African leaders and characterizations of the modern African state as predatory and patrimonial (Bates 2008; Bratton and Van de Walle 1994). The IMF and the World Bank have made economic reform (i.e. devaluation of currency, decentralization, privatization, and de-regulation of the economy) a mandatory component of their development programs, and Ghana has been one of the most eager nations to comply (Herbst 1993). Nevertheless, "good governance" seems perpetually difficult to come by. In the post-colonial period most African states have been ruled by elites that have a near-complete monopoly over the use of force (Bates 2008). Thus, without the legal institutions needed to hold both rulers and numerous unnamed others in society accountable, trust remains tenuous for all but those who have established

personalized relations or ties based on group solidarities. Indeed, there is little incentive towards good governance as long as bad governance cannot be punished. In Ghana today the existence of multiple parties puts needed pressure on current rulers to broaden their base and spread the wealth, as it were, expanding representation and stimulating slow growth. Yet the majority of economic transactions continue to rely on personal ties, and overall skepticism about government corruption is pervasive.

Indeed, because the Rawlings-era reforms were part of the structural adjustment required by the IMF and the World Bank in exchange for development aid, this period was one in which the political economy of Ghana seemed more and more under the control of external actors (Herbst 1993). Today, discouragement with the government's inability to control its own future and economic growth that is just not fast enough is a common sentiment among the immigrants that I have interviewed.

Beyond this generalized dissatisfaction with Ghana's rulers, Ghanaians living abroad live in a particular tension with their home government for several reasons. First, and perhaps most important, is the issue of dual citizenship, which Ghana's government currently does not allow. At the same time, Ghana's abroad remit roughly 400 million dollars yearly, far more than Ghana receives from overseas development assistance each year (Akyeampong 2000; Peil 1995). Ghanaian politicians regularly call for those abroad to invest in Ghanaian industry, and yet given the denial of dual citizenship and the fact that Ghana's economy is far from self-sustaining, the vast majority of those abroad continue to prioritize remittances to families back home over public investment. For the Ghanaian government itself, which is still engaged in the process of rebuilding a failed state and promoting a sense of nationalist pride, the size of out-migration is something of

a catch-22. Because the economy now depends on those abroad, it is not in the government's best interest to crack down on out-migration, nor indeed does it seem likely that they could even do so effectively. On the other hand, the fact that Ghana's most-educated frequently live abroad, seek dual-citizenship, and in essence seek wealth and status in the capitalist economies of North America and Europe is threatening in many ways to the boundary-making and consolidating impulse of nation-state building. Ghana's slow growth and their international recognition as a reform "success story" notwithstanding, there is little indication that out-migration is slowing down, and thus this tension is likely to affect both those Ghanaians abroad and those living at home well into the future.

Notably, Atta-Mills is a self-identified Charismatic, the first of Ghana's presidents to associate himself directly with the new wave of youthful, mega-church Christianity that took off during the late 70s (Gifford 2004; Meyer 1998, 2004). The pastors of these churches have become a new brand of celebrity, dominating the airways and print media in the style of mid-century Pentecostals in the United States who they often refer to and emulate (Kay 2009; De Witte 2005; Gifford 2004). Although incidences of open political positioning by Charismatic pastors have been rare—one of the most notable was Charismatic pastor Mensah Otabil's criticism of Rawlings in the early 90s—their mega-churches have become important centers of cultural critique alongside conspicuous demonstrations of new wealth and youthful energy. Some authors have noted the "apolitical" impulse of these new churches, assuming that their unwillingness to become directly involved with political parties equals a disregard for national politics as being of little concern relative to spiritual matters (Meyer 2004). Yet in the context of the above

history, their discourse of renewal and regeneration, their extensive targeting of urban youth, their push to dominate public media outlets, their explicit rejection of "the past" (Meyer 1998), and in fact their very self-positioning as cultural prophets calling decades of leaders to task are deeply political in nature (see Marshall 2009; Miller and Yamamuri 2007; Gifford 2004; Hackett 1998). Further, they are explicitly anti-factionalist, calling for the subjection of ethnic and linguistic identities to a globalized, religious identity as "born agains". When Atta-Mills' identifies himself with this now-mainstream movement of new-wave Pentecostalism, it is laden with symbolism: it is a modernist vs. traditionalist, populist vs. elitist, and cosmopolitan vs. parochial identity.

Summary

In this chapter, I have used historical data to argue that those Ghanaians who migrate abroad have a culture and an experience rooted in a history of cosmopolitanism, and yet are also deeply affected by the decay of trust relations—and absence of generalized trust—within Ghanaian society.

Understanding cosmopolitanism is relevant for investigating the church choices of first-generation migrants because it helps us to avoid characterizing immigrant churches as being primarily about retaining a connection to one's own "authentic" home culture. It contradicts a view of religious or ethnic identities as concrete, static, and determinant of where one ends up going to church. The meaning of cosmospolitanism as used here implies a global awareness and a long-standing engagement with diverse cultures and peoples. When Ghanaian immigrants decide where to go to church in Chicago, a diversity of experiences, cultural elements, and objectives come into play.

Understanding the decay of trust is relevant because it is the backdrop against which Ghanaians relate to those they meet in the host communities and those they leave in the sending communities. The breakdown of traditional social structure and predictable patterns of social relations—another way to describe this decay of social trust—puts added weight on the building of ties to the church, which at home is perhaps the most trusted and consistent institution in society. Relative to nationality and ethnicity, which have flexible and often contentious meanings, religious associations in Ghana are both more voluntary—and thus more expressive of one's own preferences—as well as more structured and enduring, given the powerful civic presence of religious organizations. One's connection to these organizations has the potential to be especially enduring in the

process of migration, now that most of Ghana's major independent churches now have branches abroad. The church therefore becomes central to one's experience, as an anchoring point for those living in the transnational space between Ghana and the U.S. (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

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